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IT'S A TRAP!



I PLAYED A *hell* of a lot of *Battlefront 2* online back in the day. Back then, I was all about the wretched hive of scum and villainy that is Xbox Live, but only because Microsoft was a little further along than Sony in terms of its online infrastructure. This year, I'll have my chance to atone for this sin, although it must be said that the ability to recreate epic *Star Wars* battles on PS4 terrifies me as much as it excites me. This thing could destroy me, sapping my life one chaotic match at a time and while Pandemic's boots will be hard to fill, there are few developers better placed to pick up the mantle on this team-based shooter than the talented folk over at DICE.

The first footage of the game looks incredible, even to a lapsed *Star Wars* fan such as myself. As much as the series may have been run into the ground by countless unnecessary prequels, sequels and spin-offs, the simple designs of the classic weapons, tech and characters first seen back in the late Seventies remain unblemished by the decades of disappointment. Just seeing speeder bikes, Stormtroopers and walkers zipping around Endor, just hearing that beautiful pew-pew blaster sound, just *thinking* about reaching for a lightsaber... it's all enough to awaken my inner child and shut out the horrible memories of toerag Anakin, pantomime Vader and whatever the hell Jar Jar Binks even is or was.

In preparation, I've gone back to a space shooter of a different kind. Yes, I've had a *Destiny* relapse, but that was always going to happen when the new expansion dropped. The journey to level 34 starts here – I just hope my luck serves me better than last time, when even people who started the game months later were beating me to level 32...

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see ya online.

LUKE ALBIGÉS
EDITOR
@LukemonMGJ
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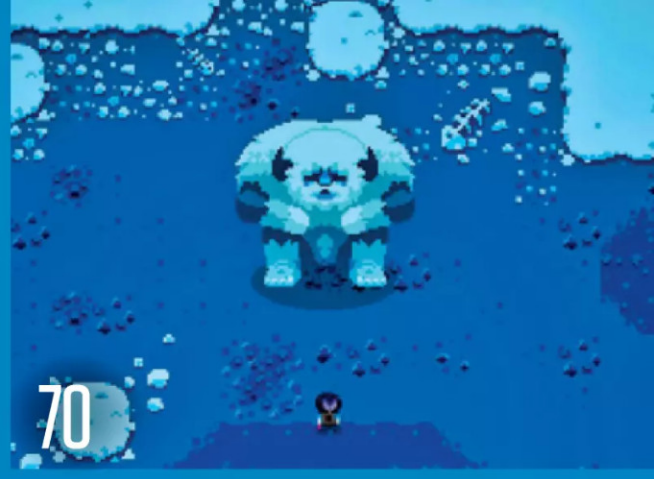
Ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster

06
STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT
Impressive...
most impressive...

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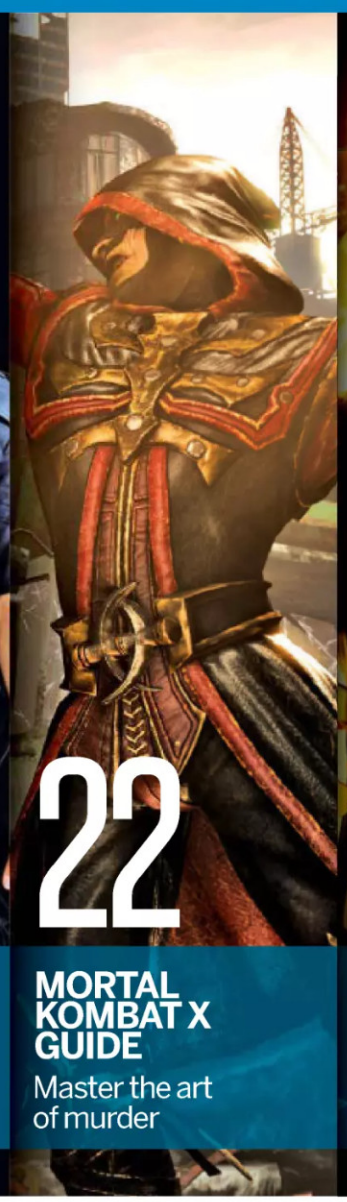






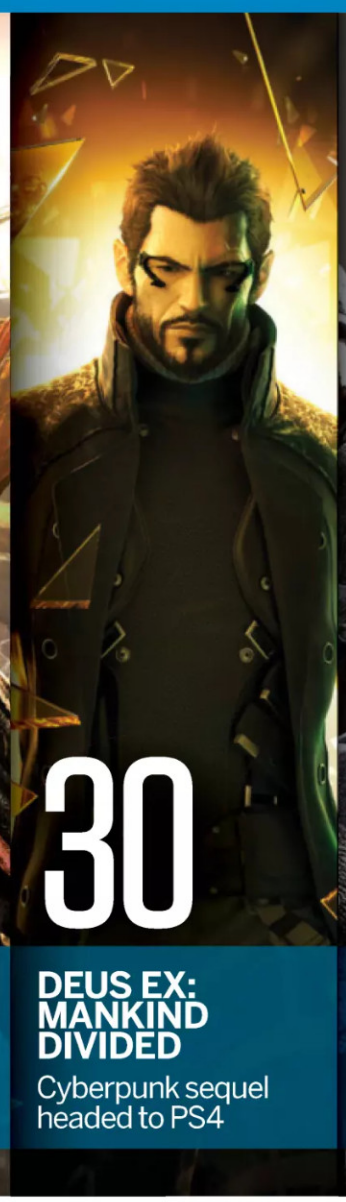
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Everything you need to know



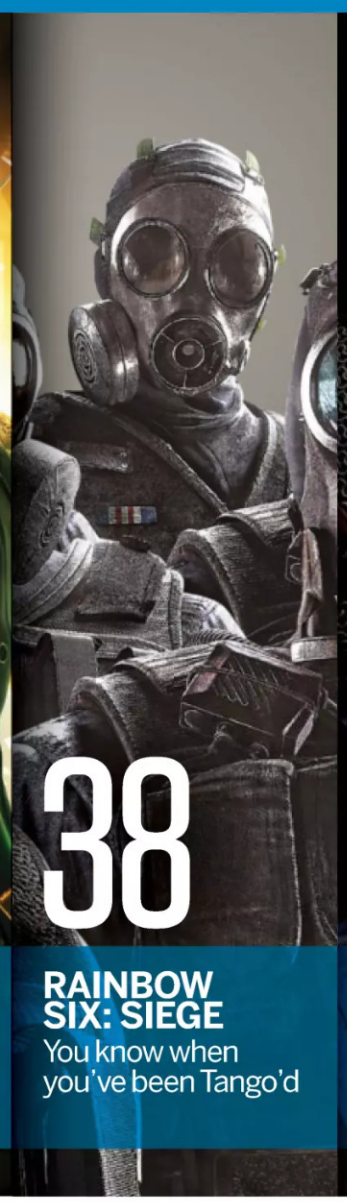
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MORTAL KOMBAT X GUIDE
Master the art of murder



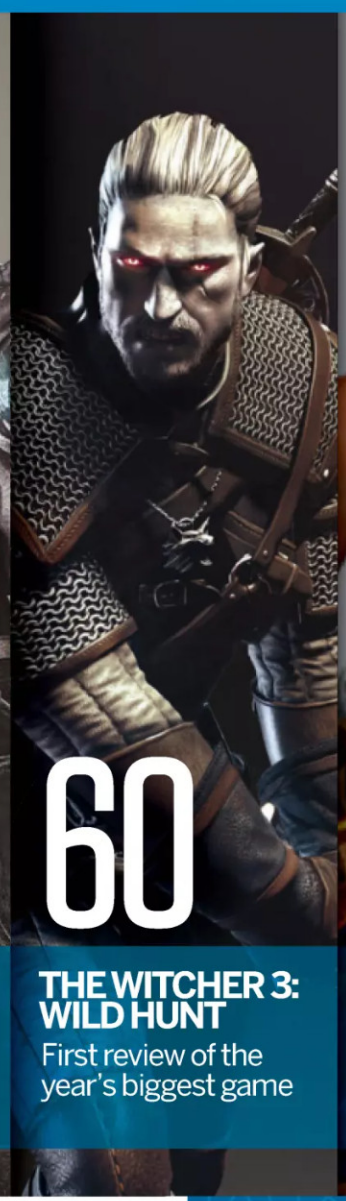
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Cyberpunk sequel headed to PS4



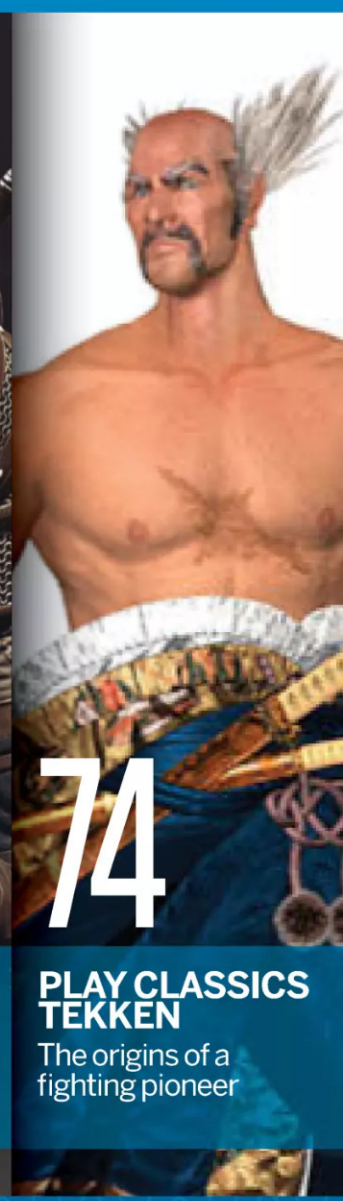
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A NEW HOPE

What happens when one of the best multiplayer-focused developers in the business gets its hands on one of the biggest brands in all of entertainment? Great things, if DICE's Star Wars Battlefront is anything to go by...

It only takes a few music bars. Even those with hearts as cold as the ice planet of Hoth get goosebumps when the iconic *Imperial March* theme rumbles into their ears; that crescendo of fierce brass after that familiar low, menacing tremble. So imagine how the guys at DICE felt when, instead of finding out through an email or a presentation in a stuffy meeting room, they were told they were getting the opportunity to make *Star Wars Battlefront* in the most emphatic way possible.

"It was revealed to the team in a spectacularly cool manner," says Lina Ingvarsdottir, senior producer at DICE. "They called a company meeting, none of us knew what was happening and we entered the room, lights out and they just started playing the *Imperial March*... and it just went crazy."

The announcement may have been suitably melodramatic, but it's something DICE has earned given its immense pedigree. The broken online multiplayer debacle that was *Battlefield 4* aside, Stockholm's finest has been responsible for the most dramatic, expansive and thrilling multiplayer shooters in videogaming history.

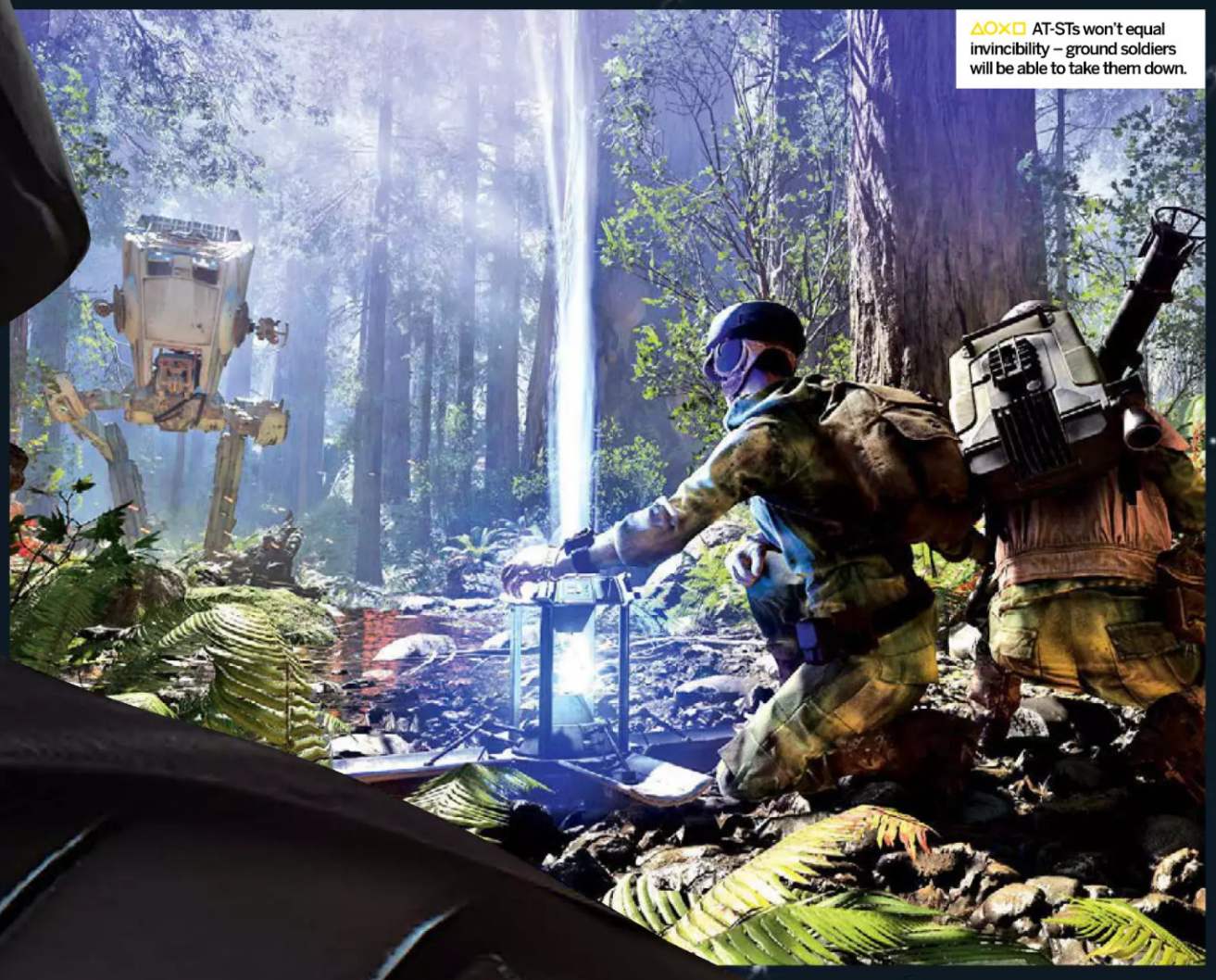


△○×□ Hopefully speeder chases will be fast and fun.









△○×□ AT-STs won't equal invincibility – ground soldiers will be able to take them down.

"EA and Disney came into this ten year agreement with EA creating the *Star Wars* games going forward and out of that, *Battlefront* is obviously one of the most beloved of the *Star Wars* franchises," explains Ingvarsdottir.

"If you think about the stables of EA studios, DICE comes up as, potentially, a very good fit. On the DICE side, when we heard about the deal with Disney, we were like 'please, we have to do it! It has to be us. We want to do it. We'll do it right. We'll make something great out of it.' So DICE, as a studio, really put the stake in the ground and said, 'we want this.' We have a very strong multiplayer pedigree and a very strong *Battlefield* pedigree."

Judging by time spent with the game, and the spectacular trailer you'll have likely had on loop for days, the fingerprints of *Battlefield* are all over the new *Battlefront*. This is a large-scale shooter where the drama is very much unscripted, where physics and mechanics combine to create the kind of carnage that you could only dream about when you were playing with your

Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader action figurines as a child.

The previous *Battlefront* offered this kind of fantasy too, of course, but they existed at a time when technology just couldn't facilitate the true scale of a *Star Wars* battle. Well, times have changed, and judging by the PS4 version we've seen running, DICE has got *Frostbite Engine 3* singing. This is an incredible looking game; offering the kind of fan-servicing *Star Wars* settings that we've all seen a thousand times before but have no concerns about revisiting, and, if necessary, blowing to pieces.



△○×□ We think we know who's winning this scrap.

"WE RESPECTED THE LEGACY OF BATTLEFRONT AND TOOK IT INTO ACCOUNT GOING FORWARD"

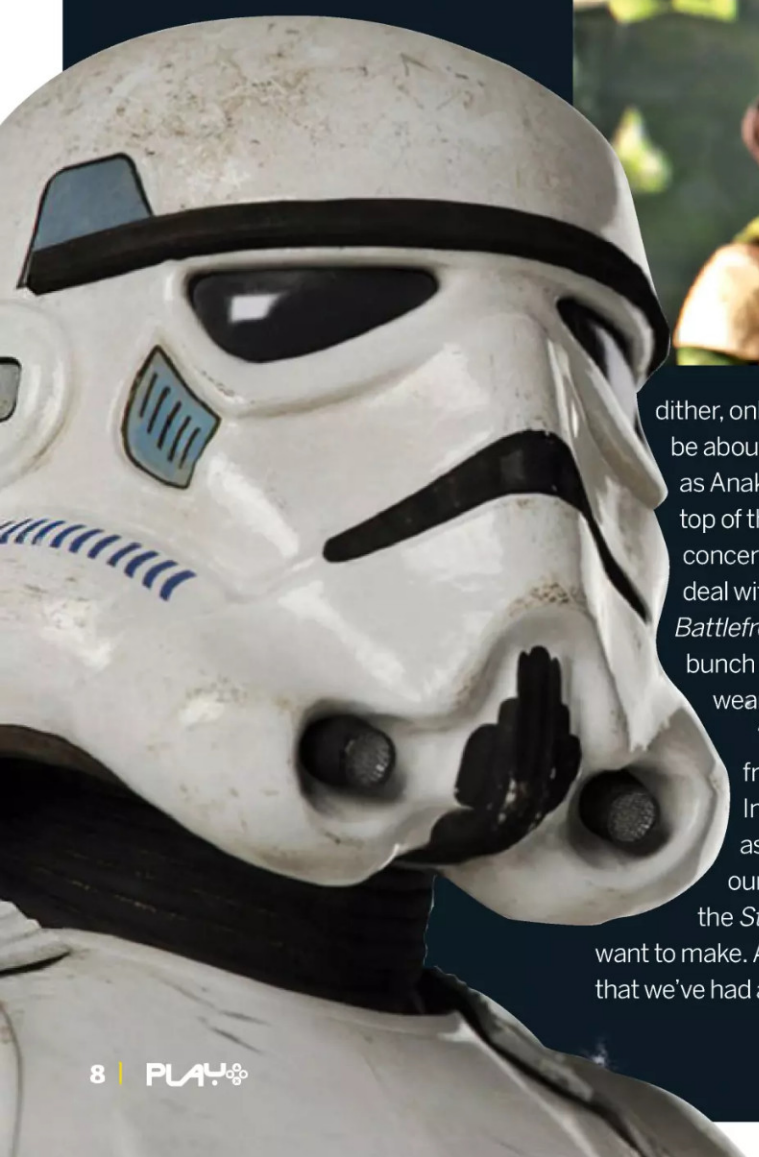






△○×□ Will PS4 gameplay look as good as this? We're not so sure about that...

As magnificent as the game looks, then, we've all been tricked before. How many trailers have shown a flash of speeder bike, a glimpse of Tatooine and a few bars of John Williams to get us all in a dither, only for the finished game to be about as faithful to *Star Wars* as Anakin was to Obi Wan? On top of that very legitimate concern, DICE also has to deal with fans of the original *Battlefront* games – a fervent bunch that may, just may, be wearing rose tinted specs.



"We have to make the franchise our own," Ingvarsdottir says assuredly. "We have to find our own identity. It has to be the *Star Wars Battlefront* we want to make. And I think that the fact that we've had a team that's a mixture of *Battlefield* veterans and new people, such as myself, who haven't worked on *Battlefield*, has been good for us in that it has enabled us to create our own prospect and boundaries as to how we want to establish this franchise."

"Obviously, [*Battlefront*] is a beloved franchise and that I think the fact that it's two generations of consoles ago means there's a lot of players that will play this game that haven't played the older games. There are probably a lot of fans that will be waiting impatiently for this game. Some of us from the team played the games quite a lot, so obviously we took a look at it but we did not feel like were obliged to implement solutions and



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features from the old games wholesale into this game. We had a heritage and a legacy to live up to and respect, and that's what we feel that we did. We respected the legacy of *Battlefront* and took it into account going forward."

It's all sounding pretty damn promising. So what exactly will we be doing in *Star Wars Battlefront*? Well, the game focuses on the original trilogy. Battles will wage across Hoth, Tatooine, everyone's favourite Ewok hangout Endor, and a reasonably unknown rock called Sullust. Expect multiple maps on each planet, based on the various game types and, of course, there will be more to come in DLC. Which, at this stage at least, is going to be free, bucking the gaming trend completely and making the whole affair seem that much more lovely.

Like *Battlefield*, the conflict will take place both on land and in the air, but sadly we will not be taking our TIE Fighters and X-Wings out into space. Still, there's plenty of sky to dogfight in, and it's unquestionably better to have arenas that do the best job possible at housing spectacular and consistent theatres of war. If that means we can't go to the vast blackness that is space, then so be it.

In fact, the overall scale of *Battlefront* will be slightly smaller than *Battlefield 4*. The biggest maps host 40 players maximum, so the days of 64-player carnage are no more. If that means the game works straight out of the box instead of six months later, then you will see absolutely no complaints from us.

Sadly, despite showing gameplay behind closed doors at The *Star Wars* celebration event, there are no details on the actual game modes present in *Battlefront*. It's safe to expect something that feels a little bit like Conquest and something else that has a scent of Rush to it, but nothing that explains some of the game's cooler features.







△○×□ Apparently we can pilot this one way or another.



What kinds of cooler features, you ask? Well, considering it's a *Star Wars* game that is based on the original (and currently best) trilogy, it's fair to say you're probably going to want to take that old black armour out for a test drive and do a bit of Darthing from time to time.

Well, special characters will make an appearance on the field at key moments. It's still unknown exactly how this will occur in real time, but signs point to the likes of Darth Vader or Chewie appearing as killstreak bonuses. Certainly, there's a new system, called Partnerships, that lets you team up with a squad-mate and gain bonuses for protecting one another and completing various objectives together – those scores could well count towards you busting out a lightsaber and doing some serious damage.

DICE has been clever in leveraging as much lore and nostalgia into *Battlefront*

LOADED DICE



The Swedish mega-studio is now the lynchpin of EA's entire console and PC output, and has been trusted with the most precious of franchises, but Stockholm's finest came from humble beginnings. The team – consisting of five people – came to the fore in 1992, developing a series of pinball games for the now-fabled Commodore Amiga, before teaming up with the likes of Refraction Games to make, well, more pinball games.

A few racers followed, but DICE's real big break was *Battlefield 1942* back in 2002, it was a breakout hit that propelled the studio to unforeseen heights. *Battlefield 2* followed that, published by EA, and from there DICE began its ascent into the global development powerhouse it is today. Now responsible for EA's most important non-sporting games, and also its proprietary engine – *Frostbite 3* – DICE is the jewel in the EA crown.

"THE ACTION FEELS FASTER, ALMOST MORE ARCADE-LIKE AT STAGES. THERE IS NO WAY TO AIM DOWN THE SIGHTS"

△○×□ The appeal of replicating famous scenes like this is plain to see.

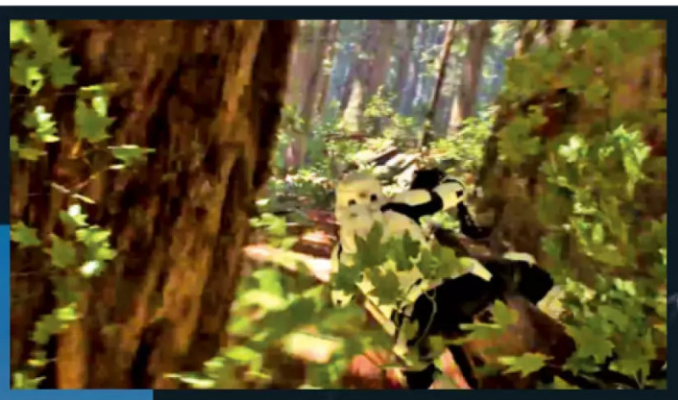
while making it still feel totally relevant in today's market. Being given the keys to the Millennium Falcon does have its perks, though, and the team has been able to raid the archives to make sure that every Stormtrooper helmet, laser blast and Skywalker eye-twinkle has been faithfully recaptured.

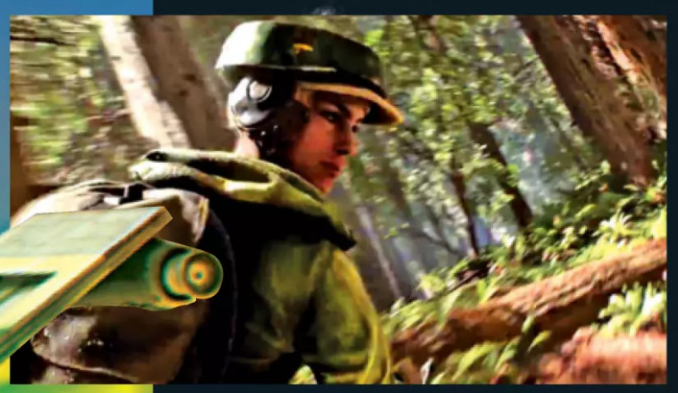
"Yeah, I mean obviously we are part of continuously creating this *Star Wars* universe and we have unprecedented access," Ingvarsdottir explains. "To be able to enjoy that access and to talk to these people who bring that franchise going forward, to be part of an event like this, where on one day you reveal the *Force Awakens* trailer and then on the second day you have the *Star Wars Battlefront* trailer, you feel like you've really been given the opportunity to be part of the biggest entertainment event of the year, which is a huge responsibility.

"We need to respect the franchise. I think that what we've built shows we respect the franchise in the way that we strive for authenticity. But we need to bring [LucasFilm] with us, in the sense that the franchise belongs to it. It's a LucasFilm franchise that we're now partners in helping create, so obviously it's a different challenge to working on *Battlefield*, which is a DICE IP, where DICE decides everything. They've been great partners to us and letting us into the Holy of Holies with the archives and giving us access to all of the people that we work with on a daily basis. We travel to LucasFilm quite often, they come to Stockholm quite often and we try to make sure that they are as aware of

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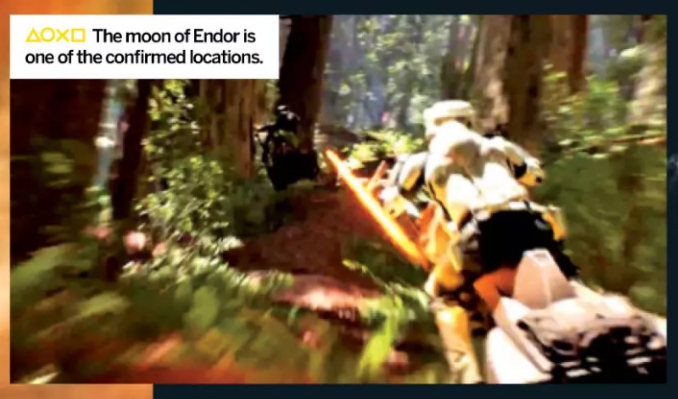








△○×□ The moon of Endor is one of the confirmed locations.



△○×□ Getting the balance right when it comes to vehicular combat will be vital.



the production realities of the game and where we're at and where we're going."

We've all heard stories about development teams 'working closely' with creators to ensure their licensed games feel as authentic as possible, but it's clear *Star Wars Battlefront* is a labour of love for both sides. And despite how it might seem, this doesn't have (from our first look, at least) the feeling that it is just *Battlefield* in a Jedi outfit.

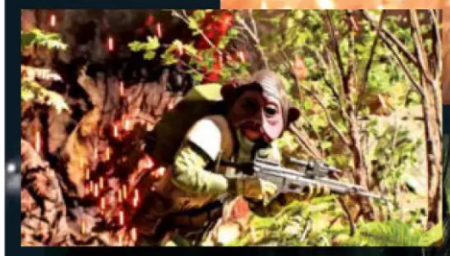
The action feels faster, almost more arcade-like. For starters, there is no way to aim down the sights, a feature that is so standardized in shooters these days that it almost feels sacrilegious to not include it. Yet, it's a legacy from the original *Battlefront* games DICE wanted to maintain. Those games featured gun battles that were faster and 'breezier' than that of your typical shooters. Imagine the 'pew-pew-pew' of a skirmish in one of the original movies and you'll get the idea. This has been maintained here, with a scoring system that rewards headshots, multiple kills, and a level of flamboyance that wouldn't really work in a military setting. In fact, the more you see of *Battlefront*, the more redundant the *Battlefield* comparison becomes. Yes, it does have its roots in DICE's own heritage, but this is a very different game, one whose mechanics demand a fresher pace and a less serious tone.

Battlefield veterans fear not, though. DICE isn't abandoning its shooter heritage just to appease *Star Wars* fans, as Ingvarsdottir tells us. "I think there's just something to be said for experience, in terms of having iterated on shooters over such a long period of time, having developed what is one of the most successful shooter franchises of all time. I think about the knowledge and experience that is unmatched. There are very few studios in the world who have that and being able to apply that to another shooter franchise is pretty epic."

One of the ways that *Battlefield* actually influences *Star Wars Battlefront* is something you may never have considered. At their best, the *Battlefield* games are incredibly cinematic, capable of producing incredible, film-like moments without a cut-scene or scripted set-piece in sight. *Battlefront* wants to take this to the next level – DICE's core









△○×□ Spawning as iconic characters will likely be a reward for a good performance.



△○×□ We want to see a strong focus on team play.

motivation here is to immerse players in the *Star Wars* universe, and more specifically, make them feel like they are actually inside the movies.

"We really wanted [the game] to feel like an authentic *Star Wars* experience and that's also what LucasFilm wanted, so they've been quite receptive to some of our ideas for how we want to bring characters in unexpected ways," explains Ingvarsdottir. "Or, you know, how you experience the game and the sense of meeting these beings. You saw the Sullustan species as an example, you remember Nien Nunb from the movies and we have species like that in the game as part of our quest for immersion. LucasFilm has supported that.

"The *Star Wars Battlefront* missions are experiences that are heavily inspired by moments in the movies and battle fantasies that are a little bit more personal. What we mean by that is we want to give you the experience, we want you to be able to play by yourself, if that's what you want." So does that mean the game isn't strictly multiplayer? The answer is a little muddy on that one. "We allow you to enjoy the game by yourself or with a friend. We all know that sitting on a couch with a friend, hanging out on a Saturday evening and cracking open a beer and having split-screen fun, that's an awesome experience and we wanted that for this game. It felt right."

It's still reasonable to assume that *Star Wars Battlefront* will feature no campaign, at least not in a classical

JAR JAR OR JEDI? We sort the best Star Wars games from the worst



STAR WARS MASTERS OF TERAS KASI **1997**

JAR JAR

SITH



STAR WARS **1983**



STAR WARS GALAXIES **2003**



STAR WARS THE FORCE UNLEASHED **2008**

WOOKIE

HAN SOLO



X-WING **1993**



STAR WARS EPISODE ONE: RACER **1999**



LEGO STAR WARS **2005**



STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC **2003**

JEDI

sense, but the confirmation of split-screen multiplayer is an absolutely huge bonus. Playing online with a buddy in the same room is a deeply underrated experience, and it's highly impressive that this 60fps beast is capable of producing that on PS4.

And it's highly impressive that a game this stunning is outputting at 60fps at all. DICE proved 60fps was possible on PS4 with *Battlefield 4*, but it's sometimes tough to remember that technical achievement in a game when it's so crushed by its own dysfunction. Getting up in arms about frame-rate isn't the most dignified thing in the world, and many games don't need to run at anything over 30, but a fast, twitch-happy game like *Star Wars Battlefront* can benefit from the improved response times and smoother refresh rate. It helps the game to look even more gorgeous.

The real question, then, is what will the game feel like when we finally get our hands on it? One mode we witnessed saw a group of rebels holding off an onslaught of imperial forces, including AT-ATs and AT-STs, as well as speeder bikes. It wasn't exactly clear if players could control the large vehicles, but Ingvarsdottir has some good news. "The walker can be controlled by a player. That's one of the experiences that you can have. I won't speak about it too much but you can control the walker."

After this epic battle, the rebels move into a bunker, and the stirring musical score fades out to heighten the dramatic tension. "What we're striving with the audio environment is that it reflects the mood and sense of the game," Ingvarsdottir tells us. "Obviously when you have magnificent event or spectacular event such as when a hero enters the gameplay, it's going to be noted in the audioscape of the game."

"THE STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT MISSIONS ARE EXPERIENCES THAT ARE HEAVILY INSPIRED BY MOMENTS IN THE MOVIES"

Talking of magnificent events, you couldn't ask for anything more spectacular to end the demo, even after the incredible sight of walkers, speeder bikes and blaster fire. As the rebels move through the bunker, you can just hear the ominous sound of heavy breath from around the corner. Yes, Darth Vader appears. The Rebels fire. He deflects every shot. Another charges and gets flung against the wall with the power of the Force. The demo ends to the sound of blaster fire, saber hums and screams. Fade to black. Wait for November.

So how are those goosebumps working out for you, eh?



△○×□ The big question remains: will there be Ewoks?











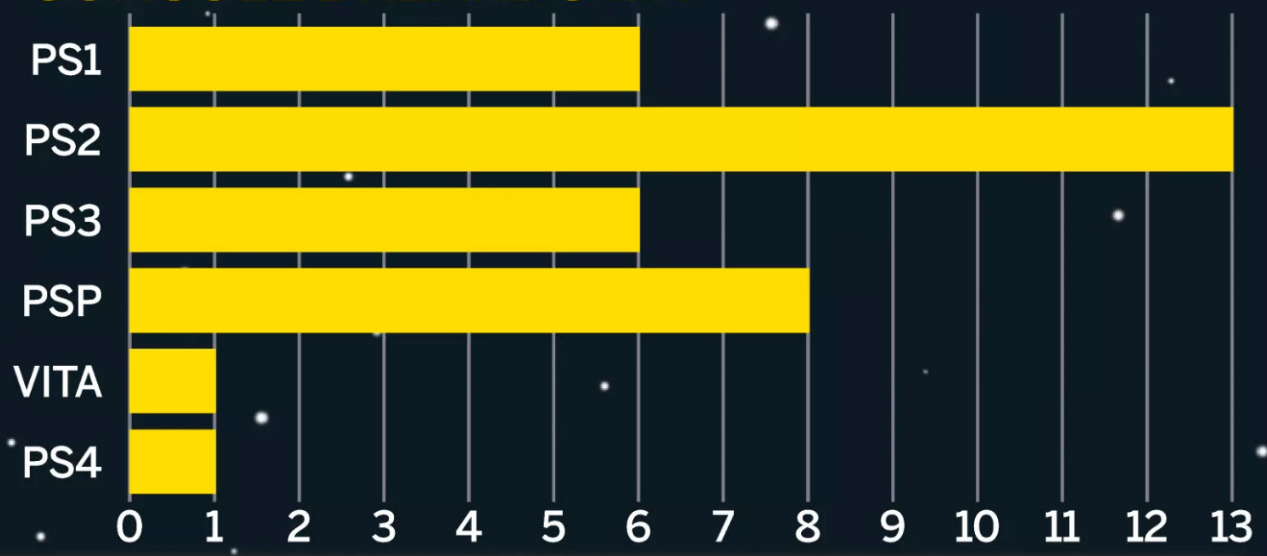


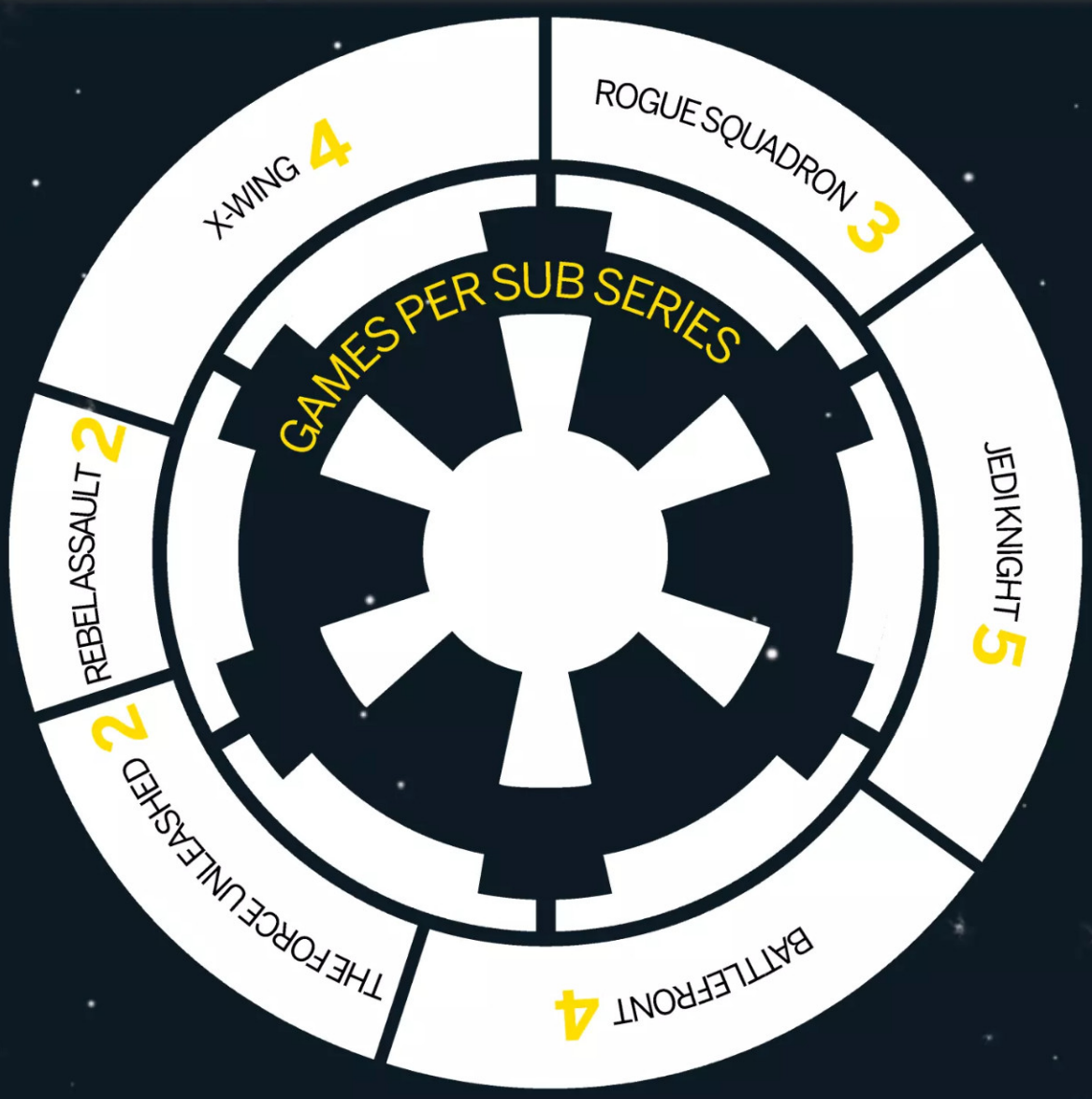
△○×□ Unfortunately, you won't be taking these TIE Fighters into space.

△○×□ It looks like DICE has captured the look and sound of *Star Wars* almost perfectly.

OVER 115 STAR WARS GAMES

CONSOLE BREAKDOWN







40

The maximum number of players in a match in *Star Wars Battlefront*

$37 BILLION

The estimated total made by the entire *Star Wars* franchise

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SURFACE AREA

45,000 KM²

That means that the Death Star's surface area is bigger than Estonia



RADIUS (R)

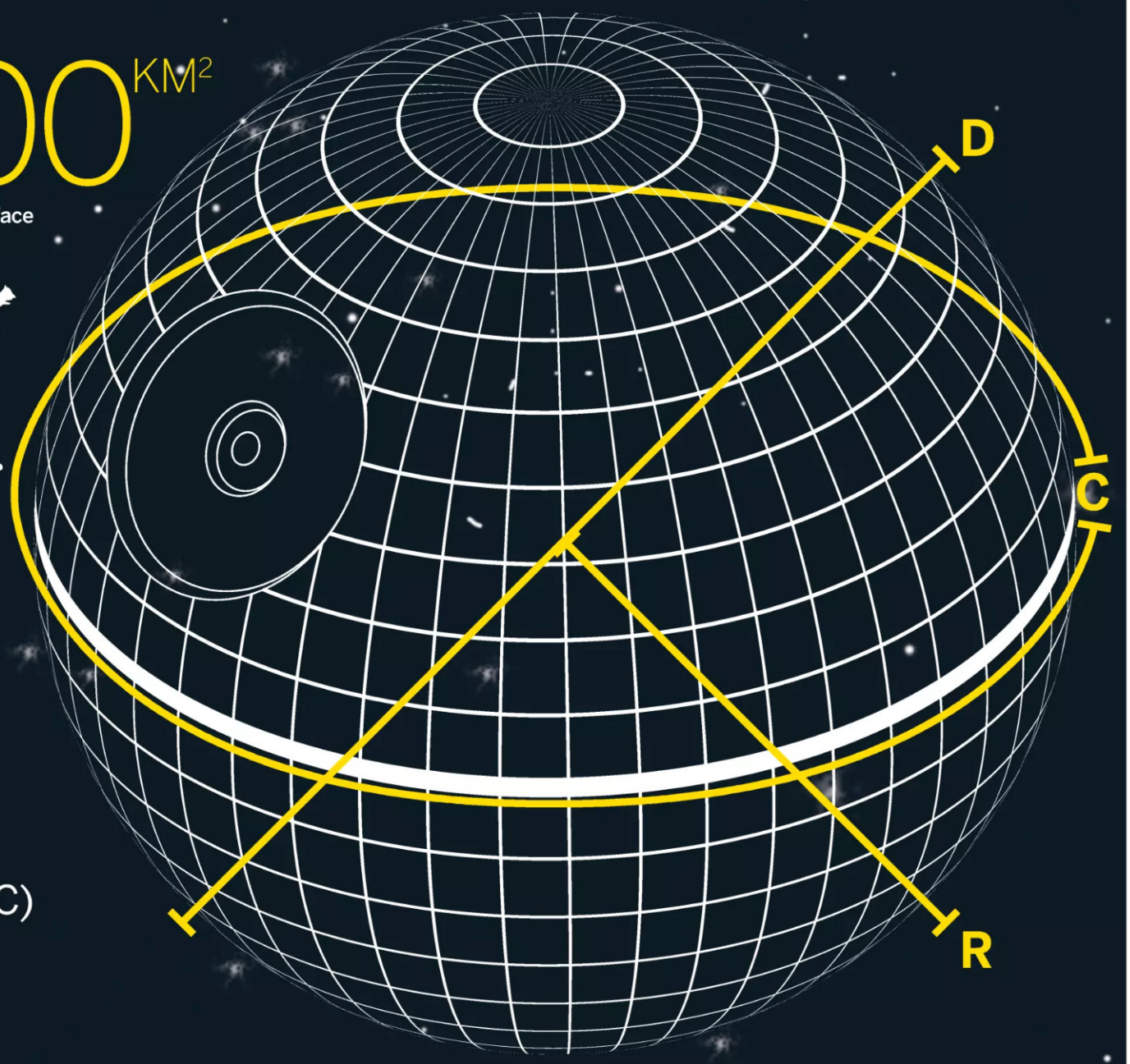
60 KM

DIAMETER (D)

120 KM

CIRCUMFERENCE (C)

377 KM



BATTLE OF JAKKU

'04 STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II

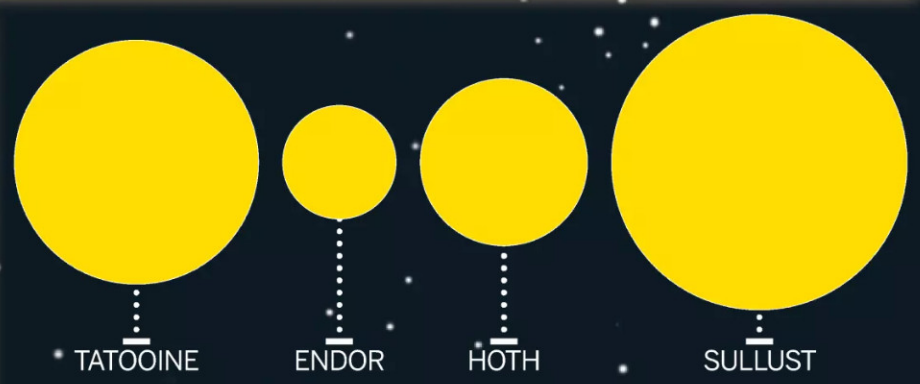
10 years since the last mainline *Battlefront* game

'15 STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

18 days is how long you'll have to wait after launch for the free Battle Of Jakku DLC



The average score for Stormtroopers on Just A Score



4 The number of planets that will feature in *Battlefront*



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FINAL FANTASY XV

Just take a look at the huge world in which it is set – there's a lot to cover when it comes to the biggest Final Fantasy ever...

I IT WAS VERSUS XIII

The game that is now *Final Fantasy XV* was first unveiled all the way back in 2006 as *Final Fantasy Versus XIII*. Needless to say, the game has suffered a somewhat troubled development, leading to it being pushed back as it switched engines and went through design changes as the years rolled on. Thankfully, the game eventually re-emerged as *Final Fantasy XV*. The concern is that its near ten-year stint in development hell will see it become another *Duke Nukem Forever*. Having played the demo, though, we're confident that the wait is justified and that the game will live up to our expectations.

II IT'S CRYSTAL CLEAR

Final Fantasy XV is part of the Fabula Nova Crystallis series, which includes the three *Final Fantasy XIII* games, *Final Fantasy Type-0* and *Final Fantasy Agito*. If you're worrying that means you are going to miss out on any story elements if you've not played those games, don't. There's no direct story links between any of those titles (except the *Final Fantasy XIII* games), rather some thematic similarities. In fact, if we're honest, the whole 'Fabula Nova Crystallis' thing seems to boil down to little more than 'this game has crystals in it'. So there you have it – *Final Fantasy XV* has crystals in it. BOOM.

III YOU'RE A PRINCE

The protagonist and character you will be playing is Noctis – or Noctis Lucis Caelum, to give him his full name. Noctis is Prince of Lucis, a powerful nation that holds the world's last crystal, which, in the game's fiction, grants him (and maybe even his nation) great power. Square Enix has said that Noctis has special abilities that he gained as the result of a near death experience, allowing him to foresee people's deaths, for example. However, these comments were made earlier on in *Final Fantasy XV*'s development, so the fiction may have been tweaked since then.

IV LUCIS IS INVADED

At the beginning of *Final Fantasy XV*, Noctis' home city is invaded by the rival nation of Nilfheim on the day that a truce agreement was meant to be signed at a meeting also attended by the nation of Tenebrae. Nilfheim uses this meeting as a ruse, bringing down the capital city's protective shield from the inside and taking the crystal for its own use. Noctis' father, King Regis, Noctis himself and Tenebrae's Lunafreya Nox Fleuret are declared killed in the attack. In reality, Noctis escapes with the help of his friends and they embark on a road trip to rendezvous with Lunafreya.

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V YOU'RE IN A BOYBAND

Well, you're not *actually* in a boy band, but Noctis and the three chums that accompany him certainly give off that kind of vibe. They include the educated and logical Ignis; lord of the noble house Amicitia, Gladiolus; and renowned joker, Prompto. There also will be guest characters who can join your party throughout the game, though we don't know how many will be available just yet.

VI ROAD TRIP!

If you've been getting a road trip vibe from *Final Fantasy XV*, you're not wrong, because that's precisely what Noctis and his friends are on as they cruise across the game's huge world, stopping only to crack out the BBQ at night. Their car can be driven manually or set to autopilot and you can travel on foot if you prefer, or catch a train to get you to your destination. Will we gain access to an airship during the game as we have in so many games in the series? Hopefully.

VII IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

Final Fantasy XV uses a far more action-based combat system that fans of the series might not be used to. It's arguably more reminiscent of *Kingdom Hearts* or *Final Fantasy Type-0* than it is of 'core' *Final Fantasy* when it comes to combat. Both defending and using the abilities tied to your equipped weapon expend MP and your actions will differ depending on whether you tap or hold down buttons, adding complexity to the system.

VIII RAMUH IS HUGE

The only summon we've seen used so far is Ramuh, and bloody hell is it spectacular. Ramuh emerges, taller than a skyscraper, and unleashes his Judgement Bolt on your enemies when Noctis' HP is depleted. Perhaps the condition for any of the game's summons is for Noctis to be 'killed', but we wouldn't be surprised if each summon was triggered by a set of conditions being met. Maybe you'll have some say over how they are triggered yourself in *Final Fantasy XII* gambit-like fashion.





△○×□ Darkness brings out more dangerous enemies, such as Goblins, whether in a cave or roaming the plains at night.





△○×□ If that massive creature decides to cross the road, then something tells us that it won't end up as roadkill.







△○×□ A brooding young man with ostentatious hair. Square Enix continues to challenge the conventions of the JRPG...



△○×□ Taking these beasts off their feet leaves them vulnerable, meaning your attacks do far more damage while they are off-guard.

IX BIG CITY LIFE

Alongside the natural landscapes we got to roam in *Episode Duscae*, there will also be big cities to visit. In the early part of the game, the main city you'll have access to is Lestallum, which is inspired by Havana, Cuba. It is a bright, tropical city with palm trees lining the road, splitting off into tight alleys dominated by markets and cafés. Then there is the high-tech metropolis of Insomnia, filled with skyscrapers that bring to mind Tokyo's Shinjuku ward.

X IT'S BBQ TIME!

Camps are important in *Final Fantasy XV*, not least because it's when all the experience you've accrued will be used to level up. They're also important because your party's chef, Ignis, will whip out the BBQ and get cooking. Depending on what you have Ignis make, your party members will gain buffs that help them in combat. These buffs run out at the end of the day, which is also when tougher enemies come out, so you're encouraged to camp every evening.

XI NO RANDOM BATTLES

Gone are the random battles of *Final Fantasy*'s past. As has been the case since *XII*, all your enemies will be freely roaming the field, from creepy Goblins, to towering dinosaur-like creatures and intimidating bosses. That's good, because knowing where your enemies are and having some freedom when it comes to whether to tackle or avoid them is far better than being dragged into arbitrary random battles.

XII ALL THE WEAPONS

Rather than being limited to one weapon, Noctis has the power to summon a legion of weapons to his side – such as a large sword called the Zweihander, a spear called the Partisan and a sword called the Avenger. Weapons can be equipped to a different action – one used for devastating counters, for example – meaning that Noctis can switch between them on the fly during combat.

XIII TELEPORTATION IS IN

One of the key mechanics introduced in *Final Fantasy XV* is a teleportation-like dash which Noctis can perform. This ability can be used during combat to swiftly close the gap on enemies or as a means of dodging their attacks. Interestingly, it looks as if it will be used in traversal as well, enabling Noctis to teleport to otherwise inaccessible areas. How extensive that will be in the full game isn't yet clear, though.

XIV YOU CAN TAG-TEAM

While you may not control your party members in combat, you can hook up with them to perform special co-op attacks. In the *Episode Duscae* demo, these attacks are triggered by performing parries when a party member is near. If there will be other ways to trigger co-op attacks in the main game isn't apparent at this stage, but it's been hinted that you will be able to unlock more co-op attacks by improving your relationship with your party mates over the course of the game.

XV YOU CAN PILOT MECHS

Magitek Armour will appear in *Final Fantasy XV*. In fact, back when the game was still called *Versus XIII*, gameplay was revealed that not only showed you battling mechs, but that showcased Noctis getting in himself and stomping around. The extent to which this might have changed over the course of development is unknown, but expect there to be some kind of mechanical vehicle that you can hijack.

XVI THE MUSIC WILL BE AWESOME

It's pretty much guaranteed that *Final Fantasy XV* will have an incredible soundtrack. For one, it's a *Final Fantasy* game and the series has always shone when it comes to its orchestral scores, giving us some of the most iconic videogame music of all time. Then there is the fact that the legendary Yoko '*Kingdom Hearts*' Shimomura is composing the game's music.





"NOCTIS CAN SWITCH BETWEEN WEAPONS ON THE FLY DURING COMBAT"







△○×□ There are going to be some truly spectacular sights as you travel *Final Fantasy XV*'s world. We can't wait to be let loose.



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EARNING XP

The games to prepare you for Final Fantasy XV

***XV* is shaping up to be a departure from what we know as 'traditional' *Final Fantasy* gameplay, especially when it comes to combat. So we've provided a handy reading list of sorts to help you prepare for that...**



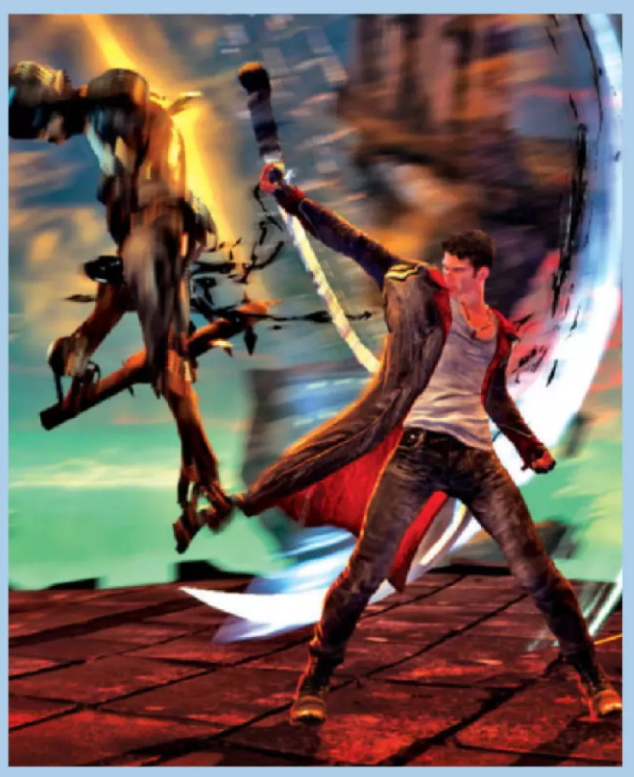
KINGDOM HEARTS 2.5

The influences of the *Kingdom Hearts* series are obvious when it comes to *Final Fantasy XV*. So exploring *Kingdom Hearts*' combat is going to be the best way to get used *Final Fantasy XV*'s own combat system.



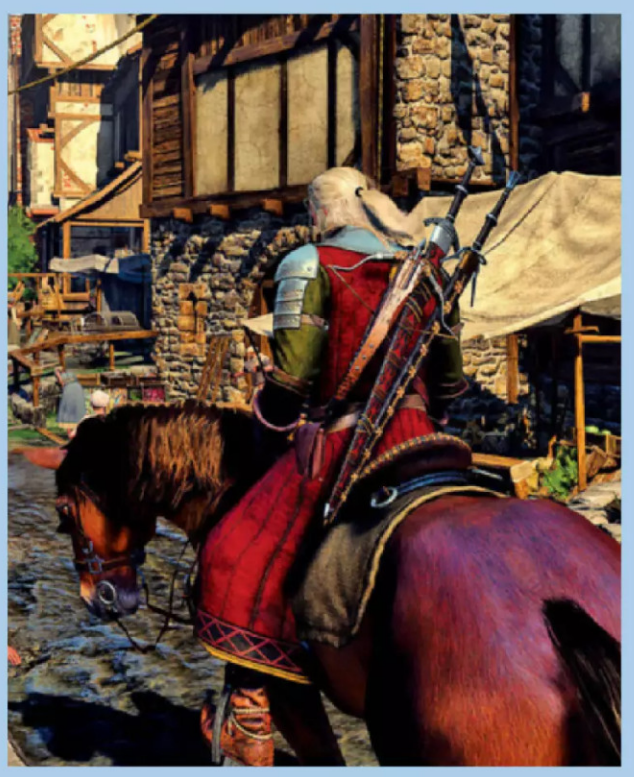
FINAL FANTASY TYPE-0 HD

Type-0 HD makes sense for you to look at as a starter before the main course. The game has an action-RPG combat system similar to *XV*'s. Also, as a part of Fabula Nova Crystalis, it will match *XV* thematically.



DMC: DEVIL MAY CRY

Okay, so the combat in *Final Fantasy* is going to be nowhere near as technical as *DmC*'s. Nevertheless, getting your head around weapon switching is going to be vital for *XV* and *DmC* will help get you in that mindset.



THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

The world of *Final Fantasy XV* is going to colossal and you'll be free to roam it as you please. So what's a better way to prepare for that kind of experience than by playing another game that lets you do the same?







XVII SECRETS ARE TO BE FOUND

In the *Episode Duscae* demo, it was found that it was possible to escape the demo area by having a car hit you at the game's world boundary. That led to players discovering some things that were maybe not intended to be discovered. That included a rather large statue of a Titan inside a mountain. At least, it looked like a statue – it may just be an unfinished version of the Titan that attempts to stomp Noctis at the end of the *Final Fantasy XV* Jump Festa trailer.

XVIII FIND SPECIAL ATTACKS

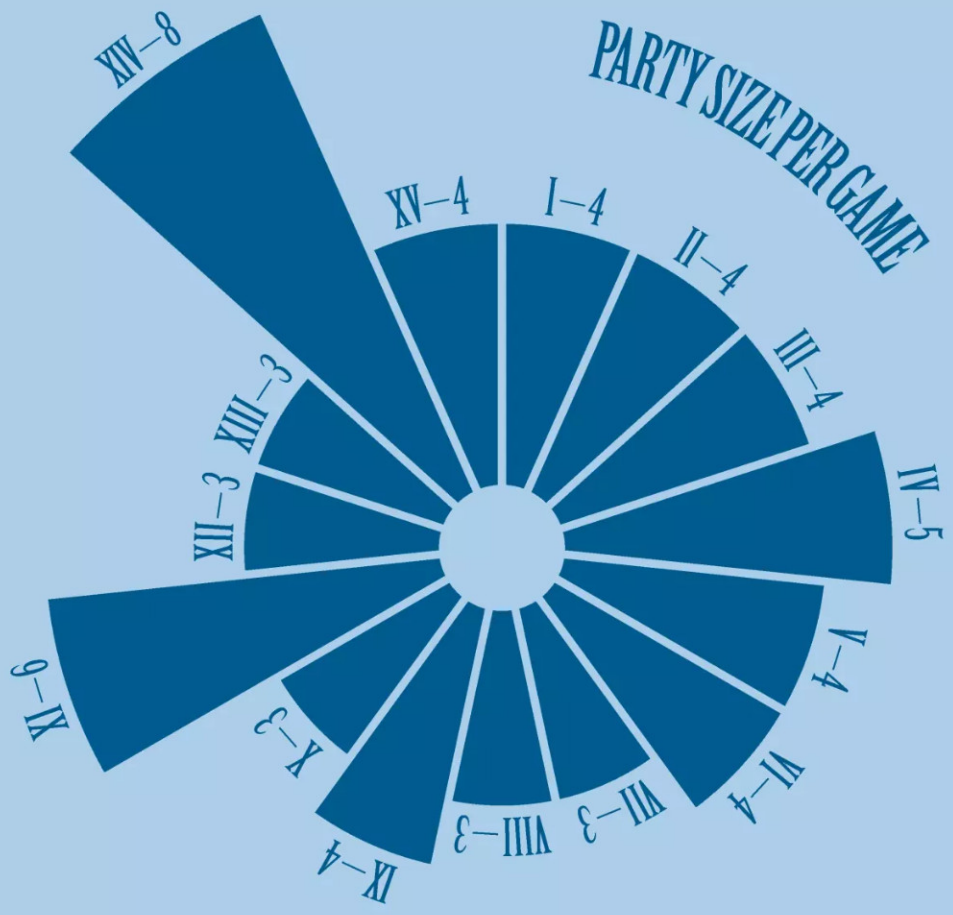
There will be a variety of special weapons you can find throughout *Final Fantasy XV* known as Armiger weapons. In *Episode Duscae*, you start with one equipped and you can find two more. The first, Aqesior, gives you warp attack and warp dodge abilities. Secace, found near the Digythe camp site, enables you to unleash the powerful Phantom Swords attack. Finally, Galatine, located near Fociaugh Cavern, gives you the ability to use the Knightshield for protection.

△○×□ **One regret is that the characters that we've seen so far look a bit too samey.**

XIX WATCH FOR WEAKNESS

The Behemoth boss fight in the *Episode Duscae* demo points to some interesting possibilities when it comes to boss battles. The creature is blind in one eye, a weakness that you can exploit by approaching it from its blind side. This could be a mechanic that's expanded on with other bosses – each having a visual weakness, or one that can be discovered by talking to other characters, and can be exploited to your advantage when trying to take the boss down.

FINAL FANTASY IN NUMBERS



BEST SELLING FINAL FANTASY GAMES

GAME	SALES	YEAR
VII	9.8 MILLION	1997
VIII	8.1 MILLION	1999
IX	5.3 MILLION	2001
X	8 MILLION	2002
XII	6 MILLION	2007



BAHAMUT has appeared in every mainline *Final Fantasy* since summons were introduced (bar *XII*), making a total of 12 appearances

72 (LXXII) Total number of games in the *Final Fantasy* franchise

X & XIII Of the 14 mainline *Final Fantasy* games, only two of them have direct, numbered videogame sequels, *X* and *XIII*

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△○×□ *Final Fantasy XV*'s new action-based combat system is showing great promise.





"THE GAME HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS HAVING A DARKER TONE THAN OTHER FF TITLES"



XX IT'S GOING DARK

Final Fantasy XV is being depicted as being a departure from recent games in the series. *XV* favours a 'realistic' setting over the fantasy settings that have been preferred in the last few mainline games. The game has also been described as having a darker tone than other *Final Fantasy* games. In that sense, it can be described as being closer to *Final Fantasy Type-0* than the mainline series.

XXI IT'S ONLY ON PS4

Given that it's been in development since 2006, it's no surprise that *XV* was slated to release on PS4 and PS3. The ambition of the title eventually led to the decision to make it current-gen only. "The technical base has completely changed," director Hajime Tabata told **Play**. "With the new hardware, you can do almost anything you want to do."

△○×□ ***Episode Duscae*'s** Deadeye could well be the first boss in the main game.

XXII DUSCAE COULD CHANGE THINGS

Have you played *Episode Duscae*? Was there anything you didn't like? Well, don't worry too much, because Tabata has said that Square Enix intends to listen to feedback from the demo. "We want to receive feedback and we really see it as an asset," Tabata said. "We want to talk to people who have played the demo and there are things that they'll say about the game that we won't have realised".

XXIII CHOCOBOS ARE BACK

Yes, the famous yellow birds are back in *Final Fantasy XV*. You will be able to ride them, that much we know. Whether Chocobo breeding and Chocobo racing will return is anybody's guess. If we had to make a guess, though, we would say that they'll be in. Square Enix seems to be going all out in this game, so why not chuck in Chocobo racing?

XXIV YOU CAN PLAY DRESS UP

Japanese designer Roen has collaborated with Square Enix on designing the clothing that its characters will be wearing, helping with the game's more realistic bent. They're also going to be selling some of the clothing that it's in-game characters are wearing. So, if you fancy shelling out a disproportionate amount of cash for a black shirt, then knock yourself out.

XXV THERE COULD BE A SEQUEL

In the 2013 E3 trailer, *Final Fantasy XV* was referred to as "a world of the *Versus* epic," suggesting that it is part of a larger story. Indeed, in the past, Square Enix has described the game as having a self-contained story climax that's part of a continued epic. Whether that means will get sequels as with *Final Fantasy XIII* or more loosely collected games isn't clear.

FINISH HIM!

Unlock everything in Mortal Kombat X, plus learn how to pull off its most horrific and cringe-inducing finishers...

KRYPT WALKTHROUGH

Unlock every area of MKX's dungeon of secrets



ACTION	ITEM	AREA	LOCATION
		GRAVEYARD	
GET	SCORPION'S SPEAR	WALKWAY OF SOULS	(-13,19)
GET	SUB ZERO'S ICE BALL	FROST PATH	(-21,20)
		SPIDER TUNNELS	
GET	RAIDEN'S STAFF	SHADOW SPIDER KAVE	(5,11)
USE	SCORPION'S SPEAR	SCORPION PITS	(18,14)
GET	SPIDER GEM	SCORPION PITS	(-18,10)
USE	RAIDEN'S STAFF	ELDER CHASM	(20,19)
USE	SPIDER GEM	SPIDER GEM HOLD	(4,26)
USE	RAIDEN'S STAFF	SPIDER GEM HOLD	(6,24) TO REACH THE HIDDEN ROOMS
GET	REPTILE'S CLAW	WIDOW'S PASS	(6,30)
USE	LEVERS (ORDER: 4,1,3,2)	SWITCH PASSAGE	(17,34)
GET	KOTAL KAHN'S SWORD	KOTAL'S KAVE	(22,34)
USE	KOTAL KAHN'S SWORD	SWITCH PASSAGE	(6,35)
GET	KENSHI'S SWORD	SHADOW SPIDER'S HIVE	(5,40)
GET	KUNG LAO'S HAT	CHAMBER OF BONES	(-7,12)
USE	KUNG LAO'S HAT	BRIDGE OVERLOOK	(-10,21) TO REACH THE HANGING BRIDGE
		GRAVEYARD (AGAIN)	
USE	KENSHI'S SWORD	HOLLOW GROUNDS	(-2,21)
		TOMB	
GET	LIU KANG'S DRAGON FIREBALL	SHAO KAHN'S TOMB	(0,6)
USE	SUB-ZERO'S ICE BALL	LIN KUEI KATACOMB	(-8,14) AND PULL LEVER
GET	ERMAC'S PENDANT	DARK PASS	(-5,18)
USE	REPTILE'S CLAW	ACID FALLS	(-5,28) AND PULL LEVER
USE	RAIDEN'S STAFF	HALL OF BETRAYAL	(0,19) TO REACH LOST MAUSOLEUM [TIMED]
USE	ERMAC'S PENDANT	SPIKED PITS	(9,14) AND PULL LEVER
OPEN	GATE	SHAO KAHN'S TOMB	(0,9)
GET	JAX'S ROCKET LAUNCHER	KAHN'S STRONGHOLD	(0,12)
		GRAVEYARD (AGAIN)	
USE	LIU KANG'S DRAGON FIREBALL	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE	(-20,4)
USE	JAX'S ROCKET LAUNCHER	SHRINE ENTRANCE	(-11,12)
USE	SHRINE TO GAMBLE KOINS – GAMBLE 2,500 KOINS TO (EVENTUALLY) UNLOCK EXTRAS		
GET	NETHERREALM KAMIDOGU		
USE	NETHERREALM KAMIDOGU – THE NETHER GATE (-24,18) TO REACH GALLERY OF SHADOWS		

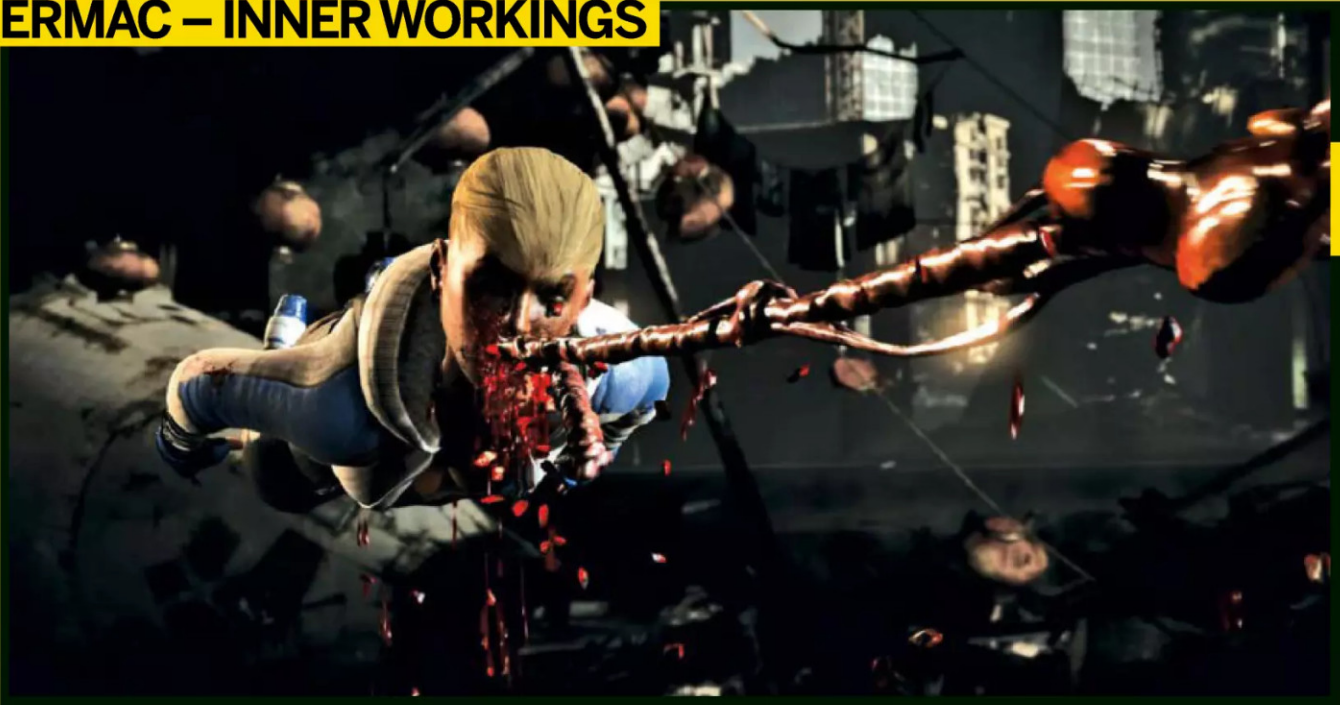
– OPTIONAL

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SICKEST FATALITIES

Prepare to drop your jaw in horror

ERMAC – INNER WORKINGS









(MID)

CAUSE OF DEATH
Broken bones and forcible removal of internal organs

Telekinesis effectively gives the master of souls free rein to do whatever the hell he wants to the hapless victims he defeats, and boy, does he ever abuse this fact. Lifting the loser into the air, all it takes is an outstretched hand from Ermac and after a few quick contortions to tear everything loose, the victim's throat is tugged out through their mouth, dragging all kinds of other innards out with it. To add further insult to injury, he then smooshes it all up into a disgusting ball and hurls it to the ground while the defeated fighter is left suspended with their intestines hanging out of their mouth. Proper grim.

LIU KANG – SORE THROAT



(CLOSE)

CAUSE OF DEATH
Involuntary ingestion of own throat

A lot of the new Fatalities seem to involve going for the throat, but there's a certain vile simplicity to this one that makes it stand out. A quick thrust to the neck is enough to break the victim's flesh and Liu Kang performs an extreme tracheostomy to tear a section of the victim's windpipe clean out. They gasp for breath and he poses with his trophy for a moment, before stuffing it back into their mouth to really make breathing difficult. As one final dick move, Liu Kang reaches in with a single finger and delivers a simple push to the forehead, the ruined victim falling backwards while gargling blood. Lovely.

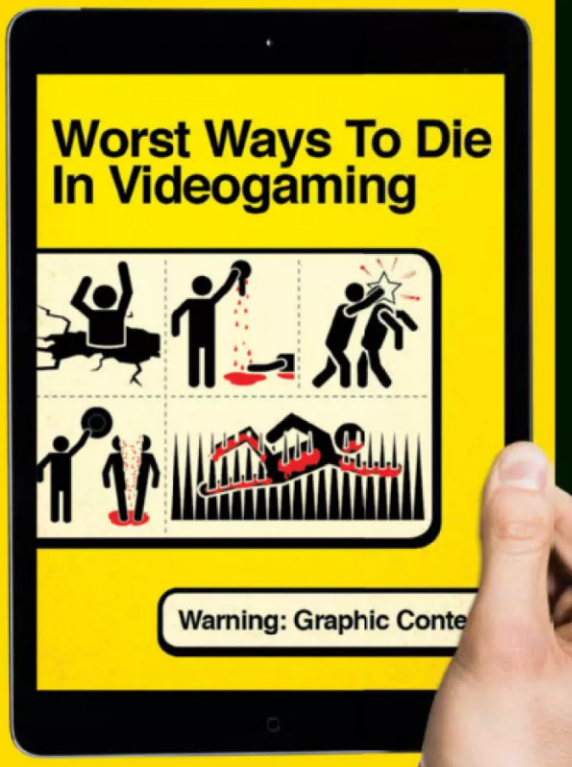
MILEENA – TASTY TREAT



(CLOSE)

CAUSE OF DEATH
Over-eager consumption of midriff

Kotal Kahn might consume the blood of his enemies, but that sort of makes sense with him being a blood god and all. Mileena, apparently, is just always hungry and she's not one to turn down a free meal. Her first Fatality sees her devour her victim's face – that's pretty gross, but it's nothing compared to this. Shoving the victim to the ground, she leaps in and starts clawing at their stomach. Flesh flies everywhere and as they try to pull themselves away from the assault, the top half of their body tears away from the rest, leaving Mileena to chow down on... whatever the hell those bits are that she's eating.

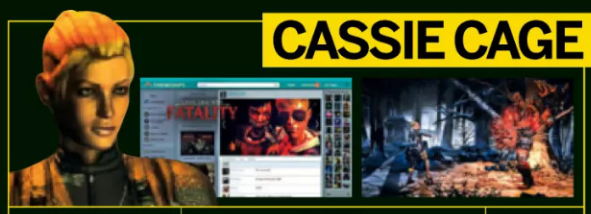


IF YOU'RE IN the mood for a bit more of the old ultra-violence, perhaps you'd enjoy our latest digital-only special issue, which collects and celebrates the most vicious, gory and humiliating ways to die in gaming. Check it out: www.greatdigitalmags.com

KRYPT UNLOCKABLES

All the most important stuff and where to find it

CASSIE CAGE



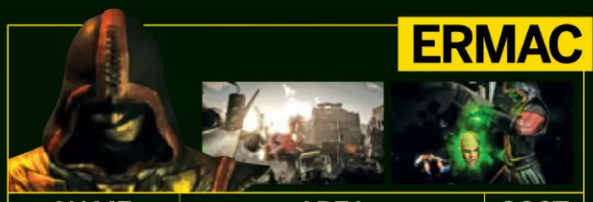
NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
SELFIE	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-22, 11)	2,170K
BRUTALITIES		
BEAT DOWN	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-5, 7)	5,500K
HATS OFF	GALLERY OF SHADOWS (1, 1)	5,410K
HALF DAY	SHADOW SPIDER KAVE (3, 12)	6,450K
POP GOES	ACID FALLS (-3, 27)	8,780K
COSTUME		
ENDURANCE	FROZEN GRAVES (-1, 10)	2,100K

D'VORAH



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
HEART BROKEN	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE (-19, 1)	900K
BRUTALITIES		
INCUBATE	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-22, 8)	9,870K
FLY SWATTER	SHADOW SPIDER'S HIVE (4, 39)	5,420K
BUG ZAPPER	LOST MAUSOLEUM (4, 3)	6,420K
ACID BURN	CORRIDOR OF BLOOD (4, 10)	6,250K
COSTUME		
KYTINN QUEEN	CHAMBER OF BONES (-7, 12)	1,240K

ERMAC



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
HEAD OUT	FROZEN GRAVES (1, 10)	1,240K
BRUTALITIES		
SOUL EATER	FROZEN GRAVES (-1, 6)	1,980K
CONTROLLED CHAOS	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE (-21, 1)	2,640K
WE WIN	THE HANGING BRIDGE (-7, 29)	111K
GLUTTONY	KHAN'S STRONGHOLD (1, 14)	2,890K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-21, 8)	1,980K

ERRON BLACK



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
SIX SHOOTER	THE HANGING BRIDGE (-8, 27)	220K
BRUTALITIES		
QUICK DRAW	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-21, 9)	9,870K
SWING LOW	CORRIDOR OF BLOOD (7, 9)	6,790K
SERENITY	ARAKNIA (13, 30)	570K
SWORD IN THE STONE	LOST MAUSOLEUM (2, -3)	7,850K
COSTUME		
OUTCAST	FROZEN GRAVES (-2, 9)	1,220K

FERRA/TORR



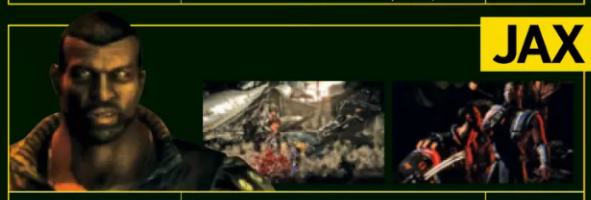
NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
PLAY TIME	FROZEN GRAVES (-2, 8)	2,350K
BRUTALITIES		
TWISTED	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-5, 9)	6,000K
PLAY THING	HOLLOW OF DARKNESS (18, 2)	2,140K
STABBY STAB	DARK PASS (8, 17)	9,630K
STEAM ROLLER	LOST MAUSOLEUM (5, 3)	9,780K
STEP ON DOWN	SHRINE OF THE DEAD (-11, 13)	2,500K+
COSTUME		
MASTER AND SERVANT	SHADOW SPIDER KAVE (6.8)	1,320K

JACQUI BRIGGS



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
FIST PUMP	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE (-21, 2)	440K
BRUTALITIES		
SHRAPNEL	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-18, 8)	6,570K
GUN SHOW	KOTAL'S KAVE (21, 33)	2,120K
HEAVY ARTILLERY	LOST MAUSOLEUM (5, 1)	8,650K
AFTERSHOCK	ACID FALLS (-3, 25)	7,990K
COSTUME		
BOOT CAMP	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-8, 8)	1,900K

JAX



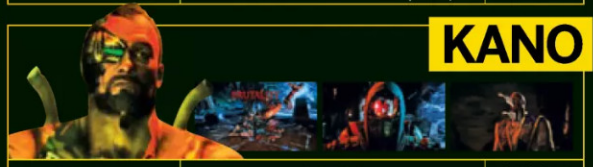
NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
JAX THE RIBBER	CHAMBER OF BONES (-9, 14)	2,650K
BRUTALITIES		
ROCKET ROLL	FRIGID BURROWS (2, 16)	2,320K
RAGDOLL	GALLERY OF SHADOWS (-1, 4)	3,020K
GROUND BREAKING	THE HANGING BRIDGE (-5, 27)	2,400K
GOTCHA DOWN	LOST MAUSOLEUM (3, -1)	6,250K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-19, 7)	2,400K

JOHNNY CAGE



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
LITTLE IMPROV	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-19, 10)	2,540K
BRUTALITIES		
BLOOD SPURT	FROZEN GRAVES (1, 9)	6,120K
WOW OUT	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-21, 12	8,710K
FALL GUY	GROTTO OF GORE (-4, 10)	8,780K
BRING IT ON	ROOM OF SACRIFICE (0, 27)	6,320K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	SHAO KHAN'S TOMB (1, 6)	1,470K

KANO



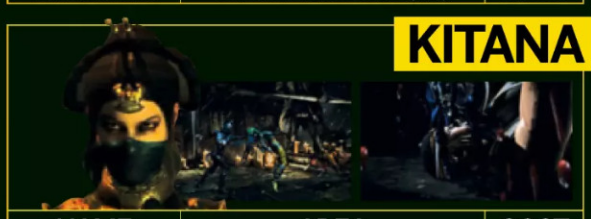
NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
KNIFE TO MEET YOU	THE SPIKED PITS (11, 13)	1,650K
BRUTALITIES		
WHAM BAM	GALLERY OF SHADOWS (1, 4)	2,980K
JUST THE TIP	SHAO KAHN'S TOMB (-1, 6)	6,450K
GLARING LIGHT	LOST MAUSOLEUM (5, 3)	6,320K
TERMINATE	SHADOW SPIDER KAVE (5, 2)	385K
POP OFF	SHRINE OF THE DEAD (-11, 13)	2,500K+
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	WALKWAY OF SOULS (-15, 19)	2,300K

KENSHI



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
MY PUPPET	REAPER'S PASS (-2, 16)	1,520K
BRUTALITIES		
INSTANT KARMA	HALL OF BETRAYAL (-4, 19)	9,960K
BRUTAL KICK	LOST MAUSOLEUM (0, 3)	37K
LEG UP	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-7, 7)	7,000K
DEMON SLICE	SHADOW SPIDER'S HIVE (5,42)	1,850K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	DARK PASS (6, 17)	1,870K

KITANA



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
SPLITTING HAIRS	LOST MAUSOLEUM (0, -3)	1,980K
BRUTALITIES		
LOST GIRL	FROZEN GRAVES (1, 7)	5,200K
BACK THAT UP	FROST PATH (-19, 20)	6,800K
BIGGEST FAN	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-18, 12)	6,140K
ALL IS ON	CHAMBER OF BONESS (-6, 13)	7,650K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	FROZEN GRAVES (1, 6)	980K

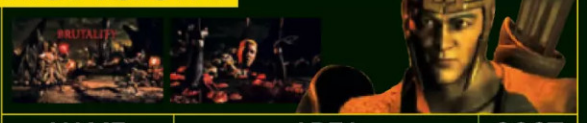
KOTAL KAHN



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
TIGHT SQUEEZE	KRYPT GATEWAY (-1, 2)	1,280K
BRUTALITIES		
TOTEM THIS	SHAO KAHN'S TOMB (-3, 8)	5,650K
STICK AROUND	LOST MAUSOLEUM (3, 1)	7,100K
DRY RUB	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-7, 10)	5,500K
SAWED OFF	CHAMBER OF BONES (-8, 13)	280K
OFFERING	SHRINE OF THE DEAD (-11, 13)	2,500K+
COSTUME		
OSH-TEKK WARRIOR	GROTTO OF GORE (-8, 8)	2,100K

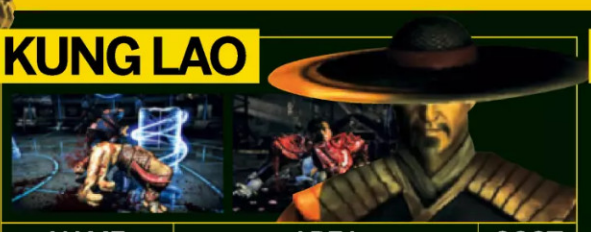
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KUNG JIN



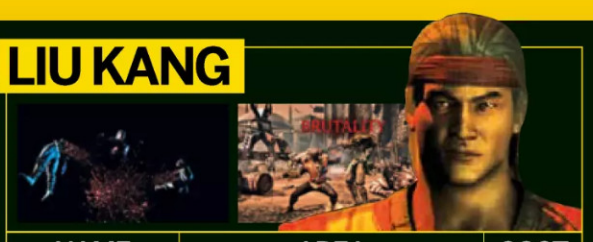
NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
PINNED DOWN	WALKWAY OF SOULS (-15, 19)	2,600K
BRUTALITIES		
ROUND ABOUT	LOST ARAKNIA (13, 26)	6,250K
BURNT OUT	LOST MAUSOLEUM (4, -3)	5,580K
BULLSEYE	THE SPIKED PITS (11, 15)	418K
DECAPITATOR	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-22, 10)	7,540K
WHERE'D YOU GO	SHRINE OF THE DEAD (-11, 13)	2,500K+
COSTUME		
SHADOW	GALLERY OF SHADOWS (-1, 4)	1,490K

KUNG LAO



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
FLOWER POT	DARK PASS (-7, 17)	2,650K
BRUTALITIES		
Z HAT	SHADOW SPIDER'S HIVE (4, 41)	2,100K
SPIN CYCLE	LOST MAUSOLEUM (10, 3)	8,450K
KLASSIC TOSS	FRIGID BURROWS (0, 16)	3,200K
GRIND AWAY	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE (-20, 10)	3,210K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	HOLLOW GROUNDS (-3, 19)	2,600K

LIU KANG



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
SPLITTER	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE (-21, 3)	2,640K
BRUTALITIES		
TREAD LIGHTLY	LOST MAUSOLEUM (2, 0)	6,650K
HOT MESS	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-19, 9)	8,740K
KOUNTER TOP	SPIDER GEM HOLD (5, 24)	7,980K
DRAGON'S DEN	KAHN'S STRONGHOLD (-1, 12)	2,980K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	KAHN'S STRONGHOLD (1, 11)	2,600K

MILEENA



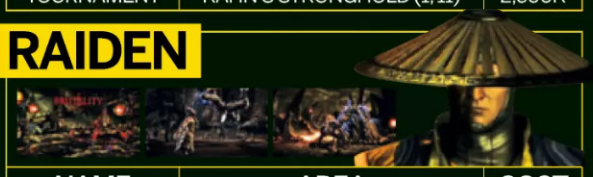
NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
TASTY TREAT	REAPERS PASS (-3, 17)	820K
BRUTALITIES		
EARLY LUNCH	FROZEN GRAVES (-2, 10)	4,980K
TELE-SPLAT	CHAMBER OF BONES (-5, 14)	5,540K
IMPALER	SHAO KAHN'S TOMB (-1, 6)	5,150K
FUN RIDE	LOST MAUSOLEUM (2, 3)	9,570K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-18, 9)	1,120K

QUAN CHI



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
BOTH ENDS	ARAKNIA (18, 30)	1,350K
BRUTALITIES		
BLOOD SHOWER	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-22, 12)	7,500K
SKULL TRANSPLANT	SPIDER GEM HOLD (6, 21)	8,880K
PUGGLE'S WRATH	CORRIDOR OF BLOOD (4, 10)	8,740K
TOUCH OF DEATH	KAHN'S STRONGHOLD (1, 12)	2,840K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	FROZEN GRAVES (-1, 8)	1,260K

RAIDEN



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
CONDUCTING ROD	GROTTO OF GORE (-4, 10)	2,780K
BRUTALITIES		
DARK FORCE	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE (-19, 3)	3,240K
POWER OUTAGE	SHADOW SPIDER KAVE (6,2)	6,520K
OVERLOAD	HALL OF BETRAYAL (4, 19)	7,720K
INSIDE YOU	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-8, 9)	5,560K
COSTUME		
DARK RAIDEN	KAHN'S STRONGHOLD (-1, 14)	10K
TOURNAMENT	WALKWAY OF SOULS (-17, 19)	2,350K

REPTILE



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
ACID BATH	HOLLOW GROUNDS (-5, 19)	2,700K
BRUTALITIES		
PUKE	GALLERY OF SHADOWS (-1, 1)	2,750K
KNEE KAPPER	DARK PASS (-8, 17)	5,870K
HEART ATTACK	LOST MAUSOLEUM (0, 1)	5,630K
BO DASH	FROZEN GRAVES (-1, 9)	5,040K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	KAVERN OF DOOM (15, 16)	470K

SCORPION



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
WHO'S NEXT	SHADOW SPIDER KAVE (3, 10)	1,550K
BRUTALITIES		
SHIRAI RYU FIRE	THE HANGING BRIDGE (-8, 25)	2,260K
NETHER HOLE	GROTTO OF GORE (-5, 11)	6,650K
JUST A SCRATCH	HOLLOW GROUNDS (-6, 20)	6,800K
LITTLE DEVIL	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-19, 8)	6,870K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	SPIDER GEM HOLD (5, 28)	210K

SHINNOK



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
FLICK TRICK	FROZEN GRAVES (-2, 11)	2,000K
BRUTALITIES		
HAVE A NICE DAY	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-8, 7)	5,600K
FACE OFF	HOLLOW GROUNDS (-6, 21)	2,300K
SKULL BASH	GALLERY OF SHADOWS (1, 1)	6,780K
HANDS DOWN	WIDOW'S PASS (7, 32)	5,140K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	FRIGID BURROWS (0,17)	1,100K

SONYA BLADE



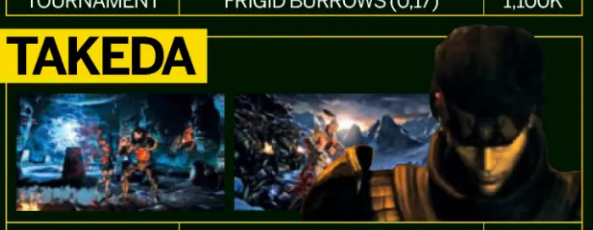
NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
HEAD HUNTER	SHADOW'S SPIDER KAVE (6, 42)	550K
BRUTALITIES		
KAMIKAZE	SPIDER GEM HOLD (7, 21)	3,980K
TIME BOMB	ACID FALLS (-7, 27)	6,140K
BOOT TO HEAD	HOLLOW GROUNDS (-7, 20)	9,780K
GARRO-THAT	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-18, 11)	6,870K
COSTUME		
TOURNAMENT	ACID FALLS (-7, 25)	92K

SUB-ZERO



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
BED OF ICE	CEMETERY GROUNDS (-19, 12)	2,120K
BRUTALITIES		
ICE CUBED	LOST MAUSOLEUM (3, -3)	6,770K
SPLITTING IMAGE	WALKWAY OF SOULS (-16, 20)	55K
FROZEN DINNER	SHADOW SPIDER KAVE (4, 4)	7,740K
PICK YOUR BRAIN	SHAO KAHN'S TOMB (1, 6)	7,140K
COSTUME		
KUAI LIANG	LOST MAUSOLEUM (3, 3)	2,350K

TAKEDA



NAME	AREA	COST
FATALITY		
HEAD CAGE	GALLERY OF SHADOWS (0, 5)	170K
BRUTALITIES		
WHIP IT OUT	GROTTO OF GORE (-6, 8)	9,630K
KOOL WHIP	FRIGID BURROWS (1, 17)	2,950K
TWO SIDED	WHITE LOTUS TEMPLE (-19, 1)	2,140K
FORCE SLICE	KAVERN OF DOOM (12, 9)	6,960K
COSTUME		
SHIRAI RYU	GARDEN OF DESPAIR (-5, 10)	1,300K

– TIMED – GAMBLE



PS NOW? MORE LIKE PS NOT YET

Why Sony's streaming service could be too little, too soon



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IN THEORY, I love PS Now. The idea of having an archive of PlayStation greats at my fingertips is so exciting that I'm genuinely on the verge of rappin' cool all over everything I can see right now. But that's not quite what is playing out here. The limited beta rollout is to be expected on a technical level – it's just a few PS3 games that can be streamed via the service right now – but in truth, the selection of games and platforms is only my first of many issues with Sony's ambitious vision of a streaming future.

Latency is always going to be an issue with this kind of service and while slower paced games will naturally work well, any notion that this could be my chance to relive former rhythm-action glories without having to invest in a CRT TV was quickly shot down by the realisation that streaming adds input lag to *everything*. Wave goodbye to those one-frame links in *Street Fighter IV*; forget about nailing *Amplitude*'s toughest tracks on Expert; hell, even *The Walking Dead*'s timed decisions would take on a new-found sense of urgency when you weren't quite sure if or when your input would be registered. This is the one single thing that will make this platform unappealing to me. Incredible though the tech behind it clearly is, any game that involves skill and/or timing is out, and just like that, so am I.

The simple truth here is that our digital infrastructure simply isn't up to task for something so demanding as this. Tech demos elsewhere have shown that the streaming model has legs, at least with the kind of connection that can support it. But in trying to get this out there to everyone, compromises have had to be made. PS Now is able to function with relatively modest bandwidth usage (read: still beyond the reaches of large portions of the country) and merely getting it working *at all* within these confines is a commendable feat. But in order to enjoy streamed games without noticeable lag, you're looking at connection speeds that the majority of users can't even *get*, let alone afford even if they could. And I imagine I'd be in the minority if I said that I'd be willing to triple what I pay for broadband if it meant the ability to play the games I love as I remember them, exactly the way they need to be in order to hold up and be playable outside of brief nostalgia injections.







In any case, going back to the old-school well doesn't seem especially high on Sony's to-do list right now. The focus today is on PS3 content and while that makes most sense both commercially (as if anyone apart from me wants to play *Silent Bomber* via streaming) and practically (well, you were the ones who chose not to make your console backwards compatible, guys...), I'm sure I'm not alone in wanting to see some of the all-time classics made available to the masses via this new technology. But then, who would buy a new *Tekken* or *SoulCalibur* game if they had the classics at their fingertips? Who would need to buy the Definitive Edition of *God Hand* when they had the original a couple of button presses away? And how would Square Enix get away with continually re-releasing new versions of the same old RPGs if the basic editions were available to all on the gaming equivalent of Netflix this service so clearly longs to be? PS Now proves to be as much of a logistical minefield as it does a technical one and although it seems like the best thing ever on paper, the facts say otherwise.

So Sony bought Gaikai to help develop this interesting avenue of gaming's future. Sweet. Gaikai's main rival, OnLive, has recently shut up shop and given that they had all the latest games available, we're guessing that catalogue wasn't the main reason for this. We're simply not well enough equipped, digitally speaking, to make streaming on this kind of scale viable just yet. As with Move and potentially even Morpheus, we've simply been paid a visit by The Ghost Of Gaming Christmas Yet To Come, been granted a vision of future tech that will be freaking awesome when it works as advertised but which, for now at least, struggles to break free of the technical trappings of our current age.

I want this to be the next big thing, I really do. But that's simply not realistic at this time. In an age where archaic bandwidth restrictions are still robbing some of day one patches and regular online play, surely it doesn't take a genius to see that playing games remotely from half a planet away isn't a viable pursuit? The tech itself is just incredible, and its potential is bloody enormous. But until the rest of the world catches up to the one per cent who can currently live this digital dream where they can download *The Witcher 3* in a heartbeat, Sony's plan for PS Now is fundamentally flawed. It's a forward-thinking investment, to be sure. But I just worry that leaving the sour taste of tomorrow's unripe technology in the mouths of gamers today may not be the best play for Sony...

> "PS NOW PROVES TO BE AS MUCH OF A LOGISTICAL MINEFIELD AS IT DOES A TECHNICAL ONE"

INDIEVELOPMENT

Our indie expert Paul Walker-Emig delves into the exciting, strange and intriguing world of indie development to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation





POST-APOCALYPTIC SCENARIOS MAY well be a dime a dozen in videogames, but **EVERYBODY'S GONE TO THE RAPTURE** is a game that approaches the end of the world in a unique way. In part, that's down to the setting. This isn't a game about an alien invasion in downtown New York, or a zombie outbreak in the streets of London. Instead, you'll find yourself wondering the streets of a quintessentially English rural village. As refreshing as it is to see a game set in the English countryside, that's not the main reason it stands out. Rather, it is the way that the game juxtaposes the mundane and the epic in a way that makes it feel relatable. "I've never gunned down a bunch of super mutants with a shotgun, but I have had moments when the car won't start and I've been in a panic to get somewhere, so I can relate in that really deep way," creative director Dan Pinchbeck told **Play**, speaking about the world's authenticity. He's right, too; when roaming around the village of Yaughton during some hands-on time with the PS4 build, we came across an incredibly emotional scene that worked precisely because it was something you could imagine happening.

△○×□ **You're free to roam the world of *Rapture* as you please, with the story being delivered in a non-linear fashion, rather than forced down your throat.**

△○×□ **Why has it taken so long to get a prison escape simulator like this?**



We find it a bit harder to imagine ourselves trying to escape from prison, but that doesn't mean we're not keen to play **THE ESCAPISTS**, a game where we can simulate a situation we shouldn't ever find ourselves in (never say never), when it comes to PS4. In *The Escapists*, it's up to you to formulate an escape plan, collect resources to craft the tools you need to implement it and then pull the escape off. In trying to do that, you'll have to follow prison routines, complete quests for fellow inmates to earn cash, improve your characters stats and try not to end up with everybody wanting you dead. The concept is great and, having played the game, we can tell you that it's well implemented too. It's also bloody hard, so don't expect to find yourself slipping out to freedom without failing a few times first.

Speaking of difficulty, we're expecting PS4 and Vita game **SALT AND SANCTUARY** to be rather tricky. We say that because the game is rather obviously influenced by a title that's known for brutally punishing mistakes. From the setting, to the art style, to the enemy design, *Salt And Sanctuary* is, at least in some aspects, a 2D *Dark Souls*. Having said that, *Salt And Sanctuary* is different in other ways. The game has got platforming elements and combat looks to be a little more fast-paced than it is in *Dark Souls*. That would be no bad thing, because developer Ska Studios has proven itself to be more than

DEV DIARY

Developer Michael Frauenhofer gives the latest on *One Way Trip*



One big difference from developing our last game has been that, thanks to PlayStation 4's power, we're no longer struggling to design our basic gameplay around hardware limitations. Our battle system could be implemented as designed with no compromises, and all changes from that point have been attempts to improve on that, from tightening the pacing and interface to increasing visual feedback. It's a big shift in perspective – polishing a design to its core instead of searching for ways to compensate for missing elements – but it's certainly less stressful, and it's addictive to feel the game improve with each and every refinement!

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proficient when it comes to action-based combat systems, responsible as it is for the brilliant *The Dishwasher: Vampire Smile*. On top of great combat, the developer intends to add the diversity you'd expect from RPGs when it comes to building your character and, if it can get that right, this could be an excellent game. This two-person development team is incredibly talented and that means we've got high hopes that they can hit the mark they are aiming to.

If you find yourself needing a break from playing games as bleak and violent as *Salt And Sanctuary*, then you might find that **WANDER** is the perfect game for you. The game is a non-combat, narrative-based MMO in which you start life as a giant living tree, with no knowledge of what you are or why you are there. From there, you are able to explore the world and gain the ability to transform into other forms – taking to the skies as a griffin, for example. The idea of the game is to leverage





△○×□ Anyone who has played a Ska Studios game will recognize its idiosyncratic art style here.

"SALT AND SANCTUARY IS, AT LEAST IN SOME ASPECTS, A 2D DARK SOULS"

△○×□ If *Wander* frames itself as an open-world Journey, perhaps it might just convince people to give it a try.





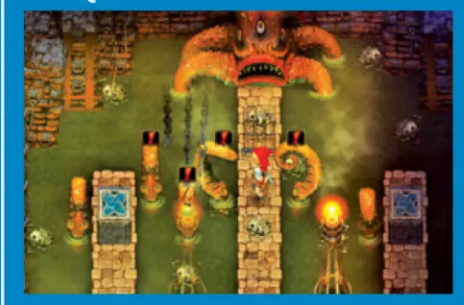


the natural tendency for collaboration that emerges from MMOs in service of constructing the story. The idea is that, by working together with other players, we will be able to share knowledge about the world to unravel its mysteries and work out exactly what's going on. It's an interesting approach to the genre, but whether or not it will prove to be compelling in practice isn't yet clear. The game appears to have come a long way since it was first announced for PS4 from a technical perspective. The question is: will that be enough to convince a console audience to jump into a non-violent MMO?

FUNDED

DRAGON FIN SOUP

PLATFORMS: PS4, PS3, Vita
ETA: Q3 2015



Secret Of Mana **and** ***Chocobo's Dungeon*** **are the reference points thrown out by** ***Dragon Fin Soup*** **developer Grimm Bros when trying to explain how the game's turn-based combat functions. It says that the flavour of the game changes depending on which mode you play, too. In story mode, the game plays like a classic RPG, while in survival mode, it's more like a roguelike.**

WISHLIST

SATELLITE REIGN

If the first-person shooter that came to PS3 wasn't really what you wanted from a ***Syndicate*** **reboot, then look no further than** ***Satellite Reign*****. The game is being headed up by the creator of the original** ***Syndicate Wars*** **and is intended to be a spiritual successor, loyal to its strategy foundations and its cyberpunk influences. It's not been announced for PS4, but the developer says it is open to bringing the game to PlayStation once it has got the PC version finished.**

IF YOU LOVE...

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS



The spirit and structure of the awesome PlayStation classic are very much in evidence in the PS4 and Vita boss battler, ***Titan Souls*****.**



ETA TBA | **DEV** EIDOS MONTREAL | **PUB** SQUARE ENIX | **TWITTER** @DEUSEX

Deus Ex: Mankind Divided

Not to be confused with Call Of Duty: Black Ops III

PS4

TIME MOVES A little slower in the *Deus Ex* universe. While we've been lugging our weak, fleshy bodies around not solving any conspiracies for four years since *Human Revolution*'s release, supercop Adam Jensen's story in *Mankind Divided* picks up just a mere two years after the events of the last game. Like we said: life just meanders along at a slower, more relaxed pace in Jensen's world. As slow and relaxed as it can be when you're being blown up by terrorists and punched through walls by baddies with steam engines for hands, anyway.

Details on *Mankind Divided* are scarce; everything we know about it comes from the game's spangly announcement trailer and a few tantalising scraps of information gleaned from developers, Eidos Montreal. We know that after (*Human Revolution* spoilers) all the world's cybernetically augmented citizens went temporarily insane at the end of the last game, mankind is now in two minds about the benefits of giving everybody powerful robotic limbs (you might say, mankind is... *divided*). This is bad news for the early-adopters who jumped on the augmentation bandwagon first, as from the trailer, they're now all being used as training dummies for the world's police to practice their baton skills on. Naturally, some of the augmented underclass take issue with this, and respond by blowing up public buildings and generally giving the robotic middle finger to Johnny Law and the un-augmented public.

This is where Jensen comes in. In the two years since saving the world from a shadowy cabal of puppet masters, *Human Revolution*'s growly walking tool shed has been upgraded with a suite of new augmentations and put to work for Task Force 29 – a outfit formed to root out the terrorists and punch them back into line. This is the trailer's money shot: Jensen creeps into an abandoned theatre in which the terrorist leader is giving a stirring speech about not being "herded into ghettos" and, variously, electrocutes people, stabs them up, and shields himself from a grenade launcher with a surprise barrier of augmented triangles.

None of the footage is gameplay, but we can take some reassuring lessons from this scene nevertheless. For one thing, it looks like, once again, *Deus Ex* will be putting us in large, open-ended levels through which we can either pick off guards sneakily one at a time, or blow through like spanners in a whirlwind loudly clobbering everyone until the world is safe. For another, Jensen's shifting allegiances (one minute he's beating up cops and defending an aug terrorist, the next he's filleting the terrorist's buddies with his retractable arm-knives) says to us that picking which side to fight for might be even more of a feature than it was in the last game.

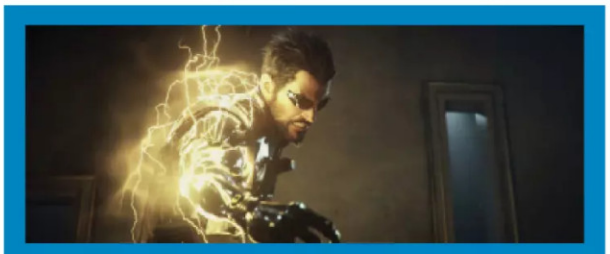
After a lot of pausing and zooming, we've also got a few ideas about where Jensen's next round of conspiracy-hunting might take him. The terrorist attack we see is in Prague – this has been confirmed by the developers. But later in the video we also get a look at holographic map of the world with glowing triangles (what else?) marking out four other locations: London, Minsk, the Swiss-Italian border and, er, Plovdiv in Bulgaria. Furthermore, during a 3D conference call segment in which shadowy figures talk about conspiratorial things like leaders being weak and timings being perfect, we see that the interlocutors are apparently based in Hong



"HUMAN REVOLUTION'S GROWLY WALKING TOOL SHED HAS BEEN UPGRADED"

HUMAN EVOLUTION

Jensen has got some new toys...



ELECTRO-KNUCKLES

A non-lethal augmentation that Jensen uses to neutralise a guard. It's got some range on it, too – Jensen will not need to scoot up right behind someone to zap them.

P.E.P.S. GUN

We see Jensen use this to knock over a group of cops like yelping bowling pins. Jensen liked this non-lethal weapon so much in *HR* that he's since had one built into his arm.

ARM SWORDS

Why fiddle about with energy weapons when you can just punch a metal spike through an enemy's kneecap? Jensen can apparently now catapult blades out of their sockets.

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△○×□ We're unsure if anyone asked for the return of Jensen, to be honest. We're glad to see him and his flashy shades nonetheless.





△○×□ That arm doesn't look all flashy, which means there may be some black market augs abound.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ Old faces. Count on *HR/ DX* characters rearing their heads in *Mankind Divided*.

□ The devs have confirmed you can slip through the whole game unseen.

× Michael McCann is returning. He wrote the sublime score for *Human Revolution*.

○ Mary DeMarle – Jensen's narration in the trailer is her excellent writing.

Kong, New York and Montreal. Hong Kong and New York have been done in the first game – but Montreal, which was originally designed as a hub for *Human Revolution*, was stripped down in the last game due to time constraints. We've not been big on betting since losing yet *another* intern to a Chinese gambling syndicate, but if we were, we'd put all our money (and work experience applicants) on Montreal getting a showing this time around.

Naturally, we're only scratching the surface of *Mankind Divided* with this sort of trailer analysis, and until we see some gameplay, all we've got are developers' promises and a very pretty marketing video. But if what Eidos Montreal is showing us is representative, *Mankind Divided* looks like exactly what we'd want from Jensen's jaunt onto PS4.

Rich Wordsworth

DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED is being augmented by Eidos Montreal. Check the website for more details: **http://www.deusex.com/**



△○×□ *HR* went heavy on the Icarus symbolism and it looks like that is carrying on for *Mankind Divided*.





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- You can place explosives on a wall while wall-running to take out pursuers.
- Treyarch says there are 40 cybernetic mods for you to choose from for your character.
- Zombies mode will be returning and will be more accessible this time around.
- There's no limit on how long you can sprint, which should keep the pace lightning fast.

△○×□ We're hoping for some explosive moments in *Black Ops III*'s campaign.

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

I think the issue is that we know what to expect because of all the previous games. We expect mediocrity.
@mrboshando

I'm getting a bit tired of the future setting, but four player campaign? I'm happy with that.
@donovan_ryder

It's *Call Of Duty* it's *Black Ops* – WOW my level of excitement has just reached number one... JUST.
@mrboshando

It looks like *Modern Warfare/ Titanfall* hybrid #boredwithfuture.
@donovan_ryder

www.imagineshop.co.uk

COMPANY LINE

"Fans who pre-order the game now on PlayStation 4 will get access to the Beta". That leads us to think the beta is more about marketing than it is testing the game...

ETA 6 NOVEMBER | **PUB** ACTIVISION | **DEV** TREYARCH | **TWITTER** @CALLOFDUTY

Call Of Duty: Black Ops III

War... war never changes

PS4

IF THE MAIN criticism of the *Call Of Duty* series is that it lacks originality, then the reveal of *Black Ops III* isn't going to help matters. Our first significant exposure to the game came in the form of a trailer that could have been mistaken for a *Deus Ex* teaser. Indeed, it bore a remarkable similarity to the Sarif Industries live-action teaser that Square Enix released for *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* a few years ago. Introducing us to the themes that the game's campaign will be dealing with, the trailer opens with the line, "Mankind's greatest mistake will be its inability to control the technology it has created." It shows us images of augmented humans and protests about scientists playing God. It's no wonder that developers working on *Deus Ex* ended up poking fun at *Black Ops III* for 'stealing' its ideas.

Perhaps a look at the game itself can help *Black Ops III* shake the impression that it's a copycat? Well, not really. With augmented soldiers leaping all over the shop, the game unmistakably brings to mind 2014's *Advanced Warfare*. Add in the fact that its character design occasionally looks suspiciously *Titanfall*-esque and *Black Ops III* starts to look like a game that's perilously short on inspiration.

That's not necessarily a big problem for the game. It's worth recalling that *Advanced Warfare* was labelled as a *Titanfall* rip-off and that did nothing to quell its success. The mechanics that made Sledgehammer's *COD* debut in *Advanced Warfare* added enough flavour to the familiar fast food brand of gaming that *COD* has always offered to make it worthwhile. *Black Ops III* needs to do the same: add just enough to ensure that *COD*'s familiarity doesn't topple over into crippling boredom.

How is the game going to do that? Treyarch has talked of a new momentum system that ups the pace of combat in multiplayer– for example, vaulting over obstacles is now automatic, doesn't take control of your weapon away from you and allows you to aim down sights. However, beyond that vague and meaningless reference to a 'chained movement system' and the introduction of some new terminology designed to make old mechanics sound new – such as 'thrust-assisted jump' – there's really nothing that makes *Black Ops III* stand out when it comes to multiplayer. That's not to say there won't be. We need to see more before we can judge whether talk of revamping *COD*'s movement is all bluster, or heralds a real change.

Treyarch has been a more forthcoming when it comes to what single-player offers. We really like the fact that the campaign will support up to four-player co-op. Our enthusiasm for *COD* campaigns has waned as we've become tired of the formula, but the idea of blazing though a spectacle- packed campaign with a few friends gives us fresh impetus to jump on in. There's also talk of having more freedom with how you approach your objectives. That starts with the fact that you will be playing a character of your own creation. Treyarch is promising more open levels that offer you the opportunity to approach them in different ways, depending on your character build. But then, we get told that *Call Of Duty* campaigns are going to be more open every year. Guess what? They're not. In fairness, though, co-op is going to make it difficult to make the campaign as linear as is normally the case in the series. Maybe *Black Ops III* will be the game that delivers on the promise of *COD* opening up.

As we all know, people play *COD* for multiplayer and it is on that basis that the game will ultimately be judged. Over the next few months, we hope that the game can prove that it has its own identity and show us what it is that's going to make it stand out from the games from which it is seemingly borrowing.

Paul Walker-Emig

If you are looking for classified intel on **CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS III**, you're going to need to infiltrate Treyarch. Or you could just go to the website: **callofduty.com**



△○×□ It's all looking very *Advanced Warfare*, isn't it?

"DEVELOPERS ON DEUS EX ENDED UP POKING FUN AT BLACK OPS III FOR 'STEALING' ITS IDEAS"

ETA 2016 | **DEV** TRI-ACE | **PUB** SQUARE ENIX | **TWITTER** @SQUARE_ENIX

Star Ocean: Integrity And Faithlessness

Remember when game titles made sense?

PS4

WHOEVER SAID ALL the good game titles had already been used might have been onto something. The early days of gaming gave us some absolute belters of tongue-twisting titles as bedroom coders looked to make their efforts stand out from the pack – *Escape From The Planet Of The Robot Monsters*, *Horace Goes Skiing* and *Hard Cheese* are three cracking examples to toss into the faces of rose-tinted morons who suggest that old games are simply just better. But as gaming found the mainstream, titles grew more sensible, more self-explanatory (if you *can* get more self-explanatory than *Horace Goes Skiing*), names slowly shrinking into single short words in an effort to make them easier to deal with. *Halo. Gun. Haze. Pure. Blur.* All the good ones got taken. But then along came the mobile copycats, with canny devs snapping up any variant of popular game titles they could get their hands on, to the point that we fully expect *Call Of Honor: War Commander* to be an actual mobile game. Like snappy band names, all the good, simple game titles are gone. It's larger numbers in suffixes and convoluted subtitles from here on out, people. Get used to it.

If its ludicrous moniker didn't draw enough attention to this new JRPG for you, there's also the amusing fact that it follows directly on from the third game in the series, *Till The End Of Time*. Granted, *Till The Next Game* would have been a far weaker title (plus it's probably already taken – damn mobile vultures) but it'd at least have been more accurate. If nothing else, it's still something to discuss next time one of those nice robots calls you up to chat about the accident you had recently or the PPI you were mis-sold. It's not just the game names that leave this fifth *Star Ocean* game with a burden to bear, either – character names have a *lot* to live up to. *Till The End Of Time* gave the leading role to a dude called Fayt Leingod but somehow, 2009 prequel *The Last Hope* managed to trump that by engineering the single most JRPG name ever crafted: Edge Maverick. Drink that in for a second. It's almost *too* perfect. Impossible to follow, even. And sure enough, Fidel Camus is a letdown in almost every respect.

Well, that's not entirely fair. Our new leading man hasn't really had much of a chance to shine, given



"THE OLD-SCHOOL RPG IS A DYING BREED AND WE'LL TAKE WHAT WE'RE GIVEN"









△○×□ Nope, nothing about that outfit makes sense. That's kinda the norm in JRPGs, mind.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ Gallivant around space, visiting planets way behind your own technology.

□ The main characters resemble anime toys come to life, which is kinda cool.

✕ Traditional JRPGs are a dying breed – fans will be glad for every one they can get.

○ The violet-haired *thing* will probably be effective in scaring children who have been naughty.



△○×□ There's way more detail in party member character models than those of enemies, which suggest they'll come in large groups.

that we've not even seen (or heard) him in action yet. His starring role so far is limited to several appearances as Generic Anime Swordsman in these stills and a handful of bullet points. We'll gladly give the lad a fair crack of the whip – traditional old-school JRPGs are even rarer these days than they were last generation (and even then, we ended up playing both *Till The End Of Time* and *The Last Hope* against our better judgement) where every team was trying to push the format in different directions. We do know, though, that our boy Fidel keeps somewhat strange company. A terrifying purple-haired elf-girl-thing that looks like a haunted egg has taken over a child's body and has eyes so big that windscreen wipers would be more effective than eyelids; another swordsman, this one resembling *The Witcher*'s Geralt enjoying a little *Final Fantasy XII* cosplay; a spiral-haired witch whose latticed outfit seems to have had every other panel cut out of it in a bid to win the Most Ridiculous Battle Attire Of All Time award (she's a runaway favourite for it, too). It's an odd bunch to be sure, and this is before we even set eyes on the inevitable 'comic relief' character – it is an unwritten, yet sacred, rule that every classic JRPG has to have one and given what we've seen so far, we are not sure we're ready, to be honest. We're not sure we'll *ever* be ready.

To its credit, *Star Ocean*'s setup has always been pretty cool, and we're actually kinda up for taking spaceships to underdeveloped planets and impressing the plebs with our superior grasp of technology again. The narrative side of things is neat, too, although multiple endings isn't quite the selling point today that it was when the series first landed on PSone. And it does look pretty as well, with stills making it look like photos of anime toys taken in a back garden and splattered with Photoshop after-effects, so hopefully it manages to retain this playful style in motion. Whatever the case, we'll play it – as we say, the old-school JRPG is a dying breed and we'll take what we're given. It's only confirmed for Japan right now but seeing as how all the other games in the series have made it to the West, localisation seems bound to happen at some point – we're not sure when, though. Bonus points if Haunted Egg Girl is voiced by Troy Baker.

Luke Albigés

STAR OCEAN: INTEGRITY AND FAITHLESSNESS has a title so ludicrous that all we can do is suggest you direct your complaints here: **jp.square-enix.com/so5**

ANATOMY OF... KRATOS

The angriest character in all of videogames is set to make his PS4 debut in a remastered version of PS3 classic, God Of War III. Prepare for violence, rage and lots of shouting...

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Just why is Kratos so... tetchy? Well, he was tricked by Ares into killing his family, setting him on a quest of revenge that culminated in him killing said god. After being betrayed by Zeus, Kratos embarks on another angry quest. And so begins *GOW III*, with Kratos taking the fight to the gods... whilst riding a titan.

BIG BOSS

Kratos is known for being a skilled and brutal fighter. He needs to be, because throughout *GOW III*, you've got to go up against huge bosses, such as the Titan, Cronos, who is to Kratos what Kratos would be to an ant. The scale of these encounters is one of the coolest things about *GOW III* and was mindblowing when the game was released on PS3. We look forward to seeing them in the remaster.

PLAYSTATION ICON

Over the years, Kratos has become one of PlayStation's most recognisable characters. Making his debut on the PS2, Kratos would appear in three numbered mainline games, as well as an entire host of spinoffs, including PSP titles *Chains Of Olympus* and *Ghost Of Sparta*, and his last PS3 outing, *God Of War: Ascension*.

UNCHAINED RAGE

Kratos trademark weapons are chained blades that allow him to attack at both close and long range. He's not careful with them, losing them as he tends to do, but some god or other always pops up to give him a new set with a different name. There are a number of other weapons that you can obtain from defeated foes throughout *God Of War III*.

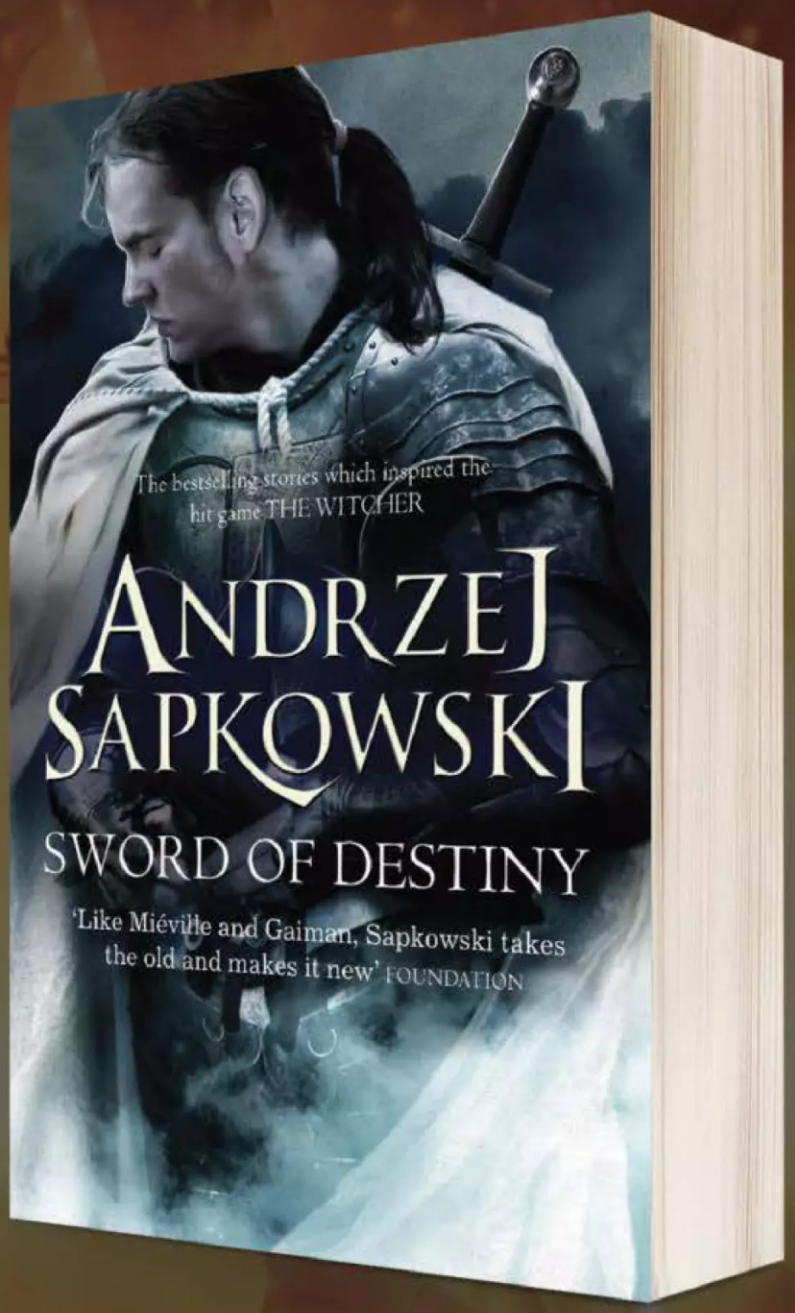
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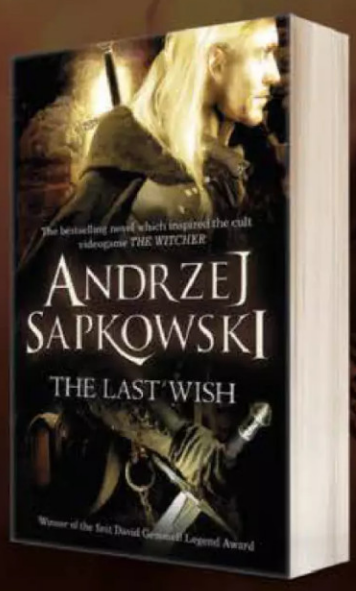
God Of War III Remaster PS4

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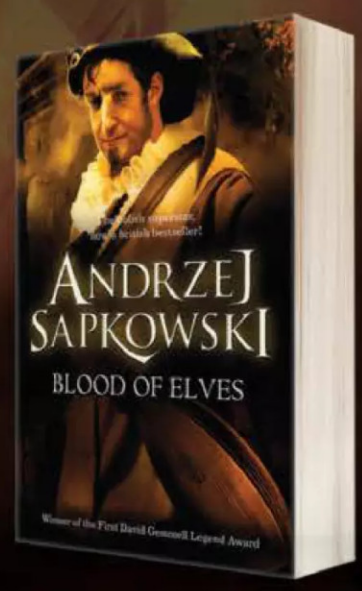
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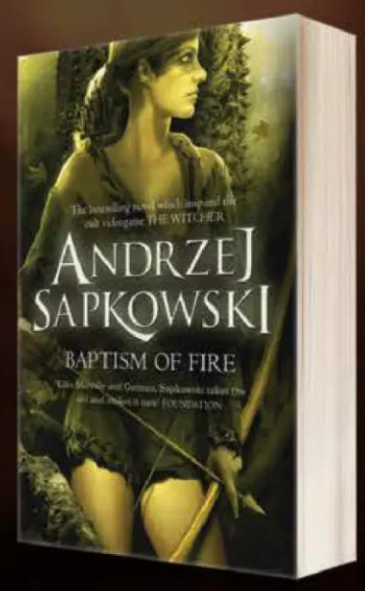
THE WITCHER





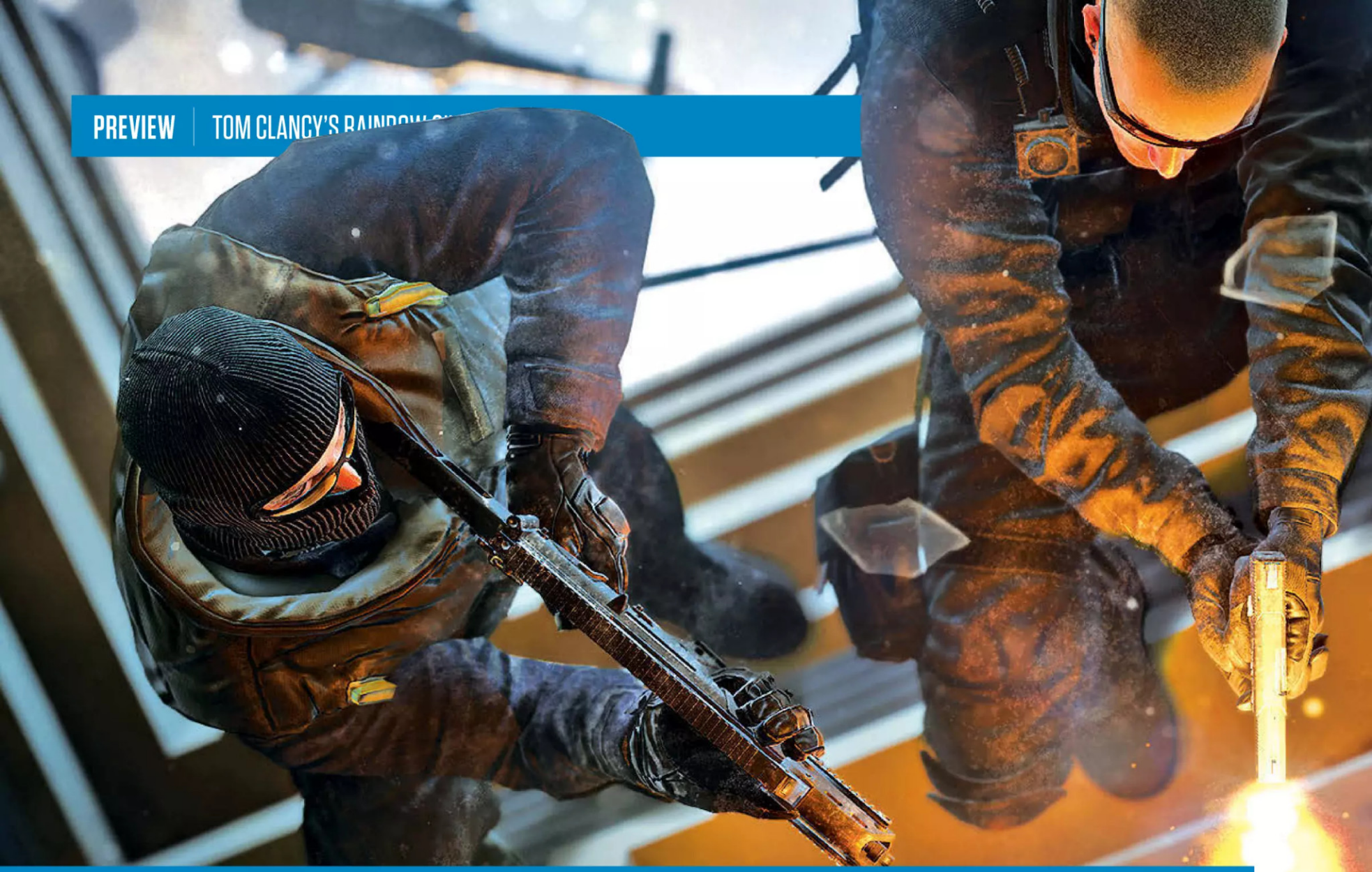






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ETA Q4 2015 | **DEV** UBISOFT MONTREAL | **PUB** UBISOFT | **TWITTER** @RAINBOW6SIEGE

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege

Terrorists, your game is through

PS4

WHEN IT COMES to *Rainbow Six Siege*, one thing is for sure: it's going to be completely different from the likes of *Call Of Duty* and *Battlefield*. Sure, those two titles have their differences, but *Rainbow Six* stands alone in the approach it is taking to realism and tactical gameplay and that makes it incredibly interesting.

There's no health regeneration and if you get dropped in one of the game's five-on-five matches, that's it. You're done. There are opportunities to revive teammates (unless they've been taken out with a headshot), but even then, they can easily be finished off by the enemy before you get to them and only come back with low health if you are successful. In other words, this is a shooter where mistakes aren't an option.

Siege is a more cautious brand of shooter, then. That goes double given that the level of destructibility the game offers means that you are never entirely safe. If someone spots you and sees you retreat through a doorway, they can still take you out by shooting through the wall behind which you're taking cover. Barricaded in a room with a hostage and think you're safe? The opposition might use a charge to blow a hole in the ceiling above you and rain down fire from up high. As well as being technically impressive, it should be evident that you can destroy anything leads to some intriguing gameplay possibilities.

The point of making *Siege* a game where anyone can be dropped quickly at any time, is to encourage you to approach it with the tactical frame of mind that's necessary to get the best from it. That starts with the planning phase where, in Hostage Rescue mode, the terrorists have one minute to fortify their defensive position while the special forces perform recon. Teamwork is vital. If you're playing as the defenders, there's no point running around, barricading different windows and doors at cross purposes. You're best off deciding how you plan to hold your position and working as a team to fortify it. The same goes when playing as the attackers. You'll get the best results by working as a team – trying to solo your way to victory is a sure way to get yourself killed.

This need to plan, support and attack as a unit is one of the coolest things about *Rainbow Six*, but it also presents some potential problems. In the game's closed alpha, we've seen terrorists barricading their own teammates out of the room they are defending and good guys taking out their allies with hastily-slung grenades. If you end up playing with people that don't work as a team, then, *Rainbow Six Siege* can quickly collapse. Even when people do try and work together, they're not going to be able to properly do so without using voice comms. You need to be able to tell your teammates when and where you've spotted an enemy, you need to coordinate on when you're going to breach a room and make your move, you need to agree on who is going to watch what door, and so on. If you end up playing with people who aren't on voice comms, the game just isn't going to be as good as it should be.

Granted, part of the cause for players not working as a team can be attributed to the fact that they're new to the game and haven't yet got their heads around it. That'll get better after

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SMOOTH OPERATORS

Each of the Operators has different abilities to aid you in your fight



SLEDGE
As the name suggests, Sledge comes equipped with a sledgehammer that lets you smash your way through obstacles.



MUTE
A 'signals intelligence specialist', Mute can jam comms, stopping explosives from detonating and stopping the use of drones.



SMOKE
His detonatable chemical gas charge deals damage to anyone caught in the smoke. A great way of controlling space.



ASH
You can blow out walls and doors *Red Faction*-style by utilising Ash's weapon-mounted breach charge.





△○×□ The hostage seems pretty much pointless given that almost all matches are won by one team eliminating the other.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ You can grapple up walls in order to take the fight to your foes from a higher area.
- □ You can choose your entry point to the map, opening up different possibilities.
- ✕ Having an alpha means Ubisoft has plenty of time to tweak in response to feedback.
- ○ Breaching through a wall feels awesome, regardless of how you do it.

release. When it comes to the voice comms issue, this is something that you won't have any problems with if you can get four other friends to play with you. If not, we'll just have to hope that the game ends up generating a community of talkers.

What we're seeing so far is a game that's got a great concept and that looks like it could be exceptional once developer Ubisoft Montreal has ironed out some of the issues and players have gotten to grips with its systems. It's a game with a true commitment to its core concepts. 'Destructibility' is not a gimmick in this game; 'tactical' is not being used as a buzzword. These things are key mechanics of *Siege* and, when they work as intended, lead to exciting moments. Will those moments emerge frequently enough to keep *Siege* engaging in the long run? That's the question Ubisoft Montreal still has to answer.

Paul Walker-Emig

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX SIEGE is barricaded behind the walls of Ubisoft Montreal. Breach the defences here: **rainbow6.ubi.com**



△○×□ This is the alpha version of *Rainbow Six Siege*, so there's plenty of time for the visuals to improve.

IN THE MEANTIME...

WIPEOUT 2048 The most recent (and maybe even last) entry in the *WipEout* series is a typically polished futuristic racing experience, and still one of the best Vita racers.

ETA TBA | **DEV** 34BIGTHINGS | **PUB** 34BIGTHINGS | **TWITTER** @34BIGTHINGS

Redout

We're accelerating into the future

PS4

THE FUTURE ISN'T quite what we'd expected, if we're being honest. It used to be a given that when a new Sony console was on the way, there would be a *WipEout* game in development to accompany it, showing off an exciting vision of futuristic racing. But Studio Liverpool is long closed and it seems that Sony has left its stalwart series behind for now, so we've had to wait a good while for our first taste of anti-gravity racing on the PS4. And while *Redout* might look a lot like the classic futuristic racing series, the developers at 34BigThings are striving to carve out a distinctive identity for their own game.

High-speed racing is *Redout*'s core offering, with impressive tracks undulating through surreal environments. In single-player, this is all done through the framework of a career mode in which you'll work your way through the Solar Redout League. This involves collecting credits to upgrade your ship and, interestingly, pleasing your sponsors is an important job, with more lucrative contracts attached to bigger demands. Seven event types are used, from standard races to more exotic variations such as the Arena race, in which you can win without crossing the finish line so long as you're the last racer alive.

Though you can obtain ten upgradeable power-ups, they're all based on racing – turbo boosts, advanced grip and more. This is because 34BigThings has gone for a combat-free style of racing, though as your ship can still be destroyed, we're expecting that some of the game's 25 tracks should devilishly test your skills as a driver.

First impressions of *Redout* are encouraging. The developers have obviously done their research and already managed to create a distinctive look for the game, while seeking to differentiate it from its most notable influence by omitting combat. We're intrigued by the prospect of the deep career mode that's being touted, which could be excellent if there's enough meat to the upgrade system and sponsorships. We're surprised by the fact that online multiplayer isn't in as standard, but it's a decision that makes sense for an indie team. 34BigThings has promised a big game, but with no PS4 release date set it's clearly early days yet, so only time will tell if the team can deliver.

Nick Thorpe

REDOUT is currently being worked on by the pit crew at 34BigThings. Check the website for more information: **34bigthings.com/portfolio/redout**

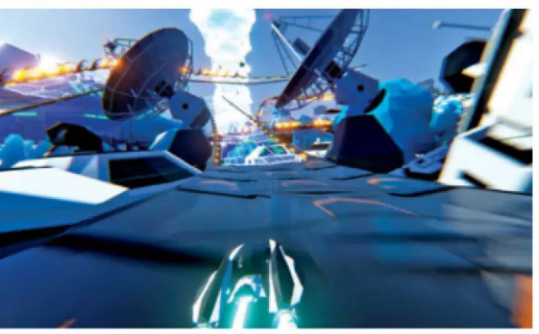


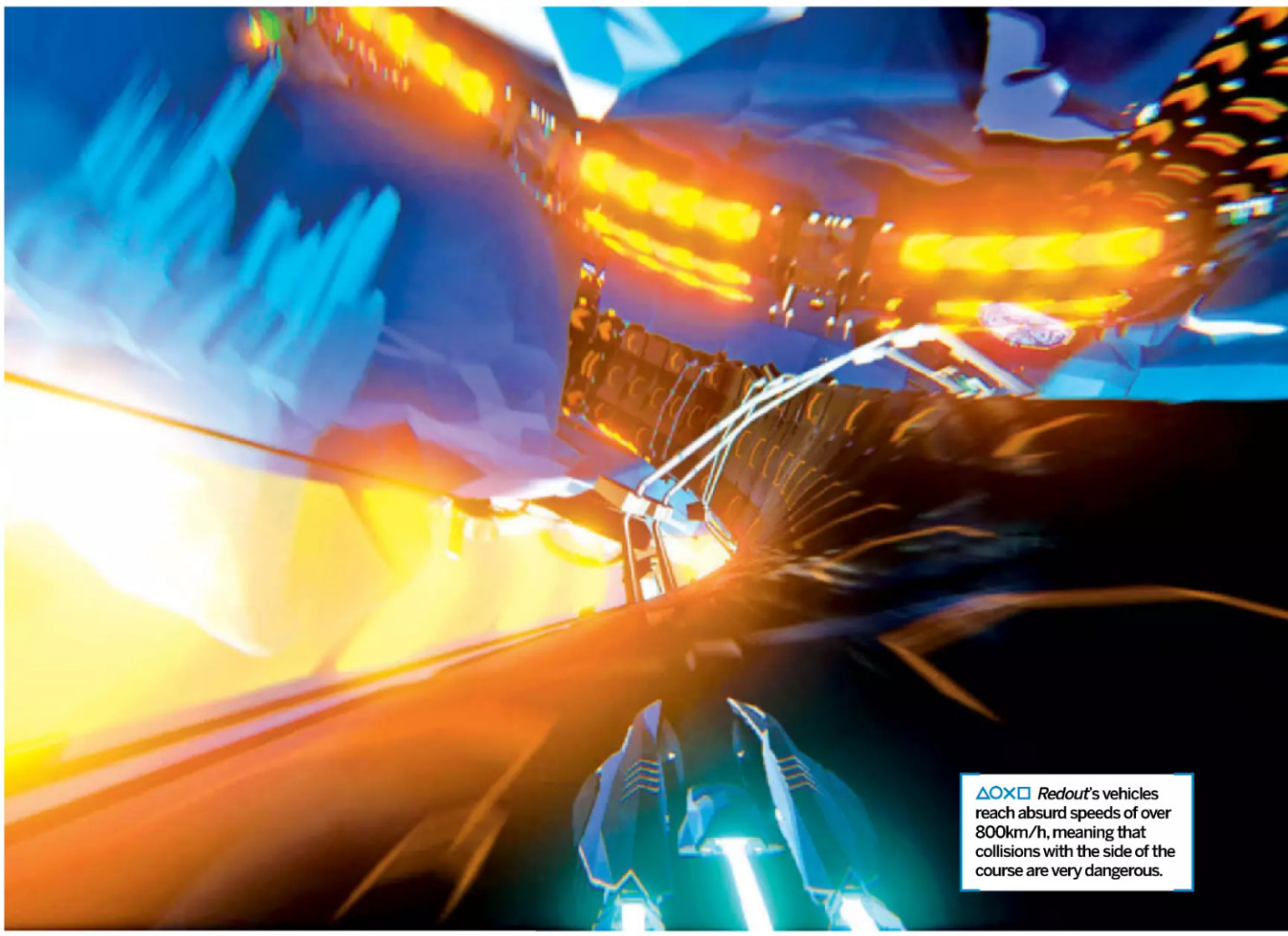
"PLEASING YOUR SPONSORS IS AN IMPORTANT JOB, WITH MORE LUCRATIVE CONTRACTS ATTACHED TO BIGGER DEMANDS"

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△○×□ *Redout*'s vehicles reach absurd speeds of over 800km/h, meaning that collisions with the side of the course are very dangerous.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ Every track boasts a stunning look, thanks to *Unreal Engine 4*'s shaders.
- □ Ships travel at speeds of over 800km/h, meaning that speed freaks will be satisfied.
- ✕ A career mode offers power-up upgrades, sponsorships and seven event types.
- ○ There's no combat, giving the game a distinctive pure racing feel.



△○×□ *Redout*'s roads twist and turn through some unique low-polygon environments, which get a distinctively modern sheen from *Unreal Engine 4*.

VALERIO DI DONATO

Q&A

34BigThings' CEO on creating Redout



Alongside well-known futuristic racers, you list cult favourites like *Rollcage* and *POD* as influences for *Redout*. What have you gained from these less celebrated games?

The sense of speed is one the main points for *Redout* and we definitely are working hard to get it right. We believe *POD* was really good at that, while *Rollcage* excelled in giving you the feeling that speed can defy everything, gravity included. We want those feels back!

What inspired the distinctive low-poly look for the game?

We started working with *Unreal Engine 4* when it was still in beta and it always hit us how amazing simple shapes looked with next-gen shaders and effects. That combination is exactly what generated the initial mood and direction for the game and we only had to keep working, improving it every day.

How does the engine distinguish *Redout* from other racing games?

Controls are tight, the game is a difficult one. This combination gives the player the correct feeling they are driving an insane beast and not just another car without wheels. You are driving at 800km/h, you have to feel it and you have to feel you are in control only up to a certain point. Adrenaline handles the rest.

What attacking options, if any, will players have?

That's something we thought long and hard about. No, there will be no weapons in the game and I will tell you why.

Scope and focus, firstly. Having offensive capabilities with the option of disabling them, allowing players to enjoy the game as they prefer, is on paper the best way to go, if you are able to deliver consistently on both aspects. We are making, first and foremost, a racing game, and that's what we want you to do in our game: race. We simply don't feel like taking the risk of diverting any effort from that core experience. I think small indies like us definitely don't need to emulate big productions, but go in sharp and hard on that one aspect of the game they want to be remembered for.

Secondly, in *Redout*, you'll win if you are faster. Not if you shoot better, or draw the right item at the right time. Our motto for this is "race faster than ever", and all the production effort towards this game will be oriented towards that mantra.

Instant Expert

ETA Q3 2015 | **PUB** FOCUS HOME INTERACTIVE | **DEV** CYANIDE STUDIO

Blood Bowl 2 PS4

DICING WITH DEATH

Blood Bowl is a bizarre mix. It's a *Warhammer*-themed, violent version of American Football with turn-based mechanics. When playing *Blood Bowl*, your focus is as much on taking out the opposition as it is on scoring touchdowns. Your success will depend on your strategic acumen, as well as the stats of your players, and a bit of luck when to comes to dice rolls.

RACE TO THE TOP

Elves, Dwarves, Dark Elves and Skaven. It's important that you are mindful of the strengths of weaknesses of each and how you should adapt your tactics as a result. Dwarves, for example, are great at blocking, but lack speed. Using your race's strengths to your advantage and exploiting the opposition's weaknesses is crucial to your success.

SMARTENING UP

Cyanide is overhauling the AI for *Blood Bowl 2*, stating that, in the first game, the AI would behave illogically, failing to respond to the situation it faced. In *Blood Bowl 2*, each race will play to its strengths – The High Elves will favour passing play, for example. Additionally, the AI will adjust as the match changes and will identify dangerous individuals on the other teams and will attempt to take them out accordingly.

ELF RAMSEY

There's an element of management to *Blood Bowl 2*, as well as in-game strategy. You'll have to build a successful team and make sure you are able to cover injuries as and when they happen. Your players will level up as you progress, allowing you to improve their stats and to buy new abilities that improve dice rolls or give you a second chance on bad rolls, to give a couple of examples. Just try not to get your players killed, eh?

BLOODY TRAITORS

You might be surprised to hear that *Blood Bowl 2* has a story-based campaign. In the early going, it will function as something of a tutorial, introducing you to the basics of playing the game, as well as upgrading your stadium and managing your team. Outside of that, there will be tales of traitorous players selling out to the highest bidder and accidents that result in you having to play on a hazardous field.

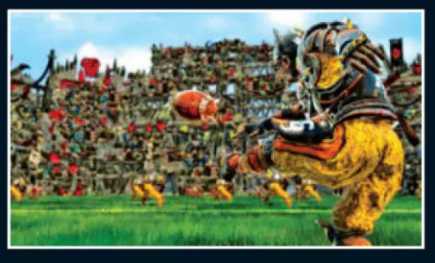
RISING FROM THE ASHES



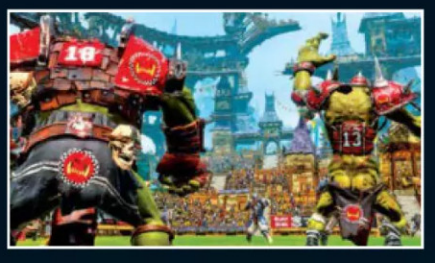
The focus of *Blood Bowl 2*'s story is the Reikland Reavers, a formerly successful human team that has fallen from grace and is now languishing in obscurity after its unsustainable and questionable spending habits saw the team collapse.



Seen as a joke in the world of Blood Bowl, your will be tasked with changing that perception and returning the Reikland Reavers to the former glory which they once enjoyed. So it is kind of similar to every underdog film ever made, only this time we have Orcs.



Anyway, helping you on your quest will be the Reavers' notoriously tough team captain, Griff The Godlike, a man who became famous for a tackle that ripped a few ears and noses from his opponents and netted him a suspension.



He'll be accompanied by Mighty Zug, a towering tough guy who is so big that he is often mistaken for an ogre. He apparently holds the record for 'most opponents bitten in one match'. So essentially Zug is *Bloodbowl 2*'s version of Luis Suárez.

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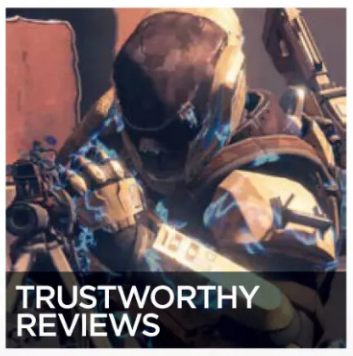
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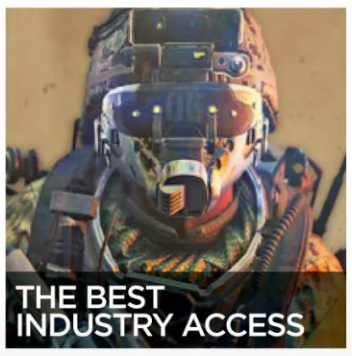
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PREVIEW

A quick look at some of the other awesome games that are just around the corner

1 SHADOW OF THE BEAST

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q1 2016

"IT HIT ME as a game where I was filling in blanks and it became more than just a game," Matt Birch, the man behind the remake of Amiga classic *Shadow Of The Beast* told **Play** when we asked what it is that makes him so passionate about it, telling us how he built theories around everything in the game. It's that sense of wonder that Birch hopes to give to a new generation of players. This 2D action-platformer puts you in control of a brutal protagonist, making it feel a like a 2D *God Of War*. The game is still early in development, but the enthusiasm of the man heading it up means it's worth keeping an eye on.

2 GUNS UP!

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2015

'FREE-TO-PLAY' is a dirty term in some aspects, but it's with the likes of *Guns Up!* that Sony hopes to change those kinds of perceptions. The game is a mix of tower defence and RTS, tasking you with sending out troops and using power-ups collected on the battlefield in order to take down bases built by other players. We don't yet know precisely where the free-to-play stuff comes in, but you'll be pleased to hear that there's no 'pay to reduce build time' option or any other such pay-to-win mechanic that we've come across, so that's a good sign. We've had some hands on time with *Guns Up!* and while we had some fun with it, it's probably not something we can see ourselves going crazy over...









3 NOM NOM GALAXY

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2015

DO YOU LIKE, a) *Minecraft* and b) soup? If your answer to both those questions is 'yes', then rejoice, as we think *Nom Nom Galaxy* might be right up your street. The game is all about running a soup company and trying to outdo your soupy rivals. In order to do that, you need to explore a 2D landscape, gather resources and build a base that you can automate to make your production process more efficient. Grab all of the market share and you can move on to new, tougher planets. These games can be frustrating when not built with a controller in mind; fortunately, *Nom Nom Galaxy* doesn't seem to be one of those.

4 RORY MCILROY'S PGA TOUR

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2015

TIGER WOODS' STANDING in the golfing world isn't what it used to be and as a result, he's been unceremoniously dropped as the cover star for EA's *PGA* series. In his place is 2014 PGA Championship winner Rory McIlroy. We can't say that we are huge golf fans, but there is something very relaxing about playing a good golf game (until you shank a vital shot, that is). For that reason, it's good to see the *PGA* series return after its absence last year. It's also great to see that this version isn't taking itself too seriously either, including ridiculous courses, such as one based on the *Battlefield 4* map, Paracel Storm.





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ROUNDUP











5 ALIENATION

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2015

THE DEVELOPERS OF *Alienation* describe it as the answer to the question, what would happen if *Resogun* and *Dead Nation* got it on? That comparison makes sense, but we'd also throw *Helldivers* into the mix, given that this top-down shooter is very much built for co-op. The core of a good game is there, but in the preview build we played, we didn't have the opportunity to play with the loadouts and abilities, which we expect to be key to *Alienation*'s team-based gameplay. Given that this game is being made by the team behind *Resogun* and *Super Stardust HD*, we're confident that *Alienation* is going to turn out well, but we'll have to wait until we get our hands on it again to give you a definitive verdict.

6 UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: SPRING 2016

AH, THE DELAY – the hallmark of modern gaming. *Uncharted 4* is not exempt from that trend, with Naughty Dog announcing that the game has been pushed back until Spring 2016. "This game deserves every bit of the attention to detail, precise pacing, and nuanced storytelling Naughty Dog is known for," the studio's Neil Druckmann said, explaining the delay. "We've made the choice of pushing the game's release date. Giving us a few extra months will make certain that *Uncharted 4* not only meets the team's high standards, but the high standards that gamers have come to expect from a Naughty Dog title."

7 AMPLITUDE

FORMAT: PS4, PS3
RELEASE DATE: SUMMER 2015

THERE'S NOT A great deal to be said about *Amplitude*, for a simple reason. The original version of the game was brilliant, the same team is making the new version and it's being built on the original code. That means it's essentially going to be the same game, but it'll look better. In truth, the visuals aren't all that important for a rhythm action game like this anyway. What we're getting at is that *Amplitude* was good back in 2003 and our hands-on time has done nothing to suggest that it won't be equally as good in 2015. Of course, it will have a whole bunch of new songs, so there's motivation for *Amplitude* veterans who have mastered all those old tunes to go back for a fresh challenge.

8 HUNGER

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q4 2015

WE'RE VERY EXCITED about *Hunger*, a platformer that looks like it's been molded from clay. The developer, Tarsier, describes it as a 'suspense-adventure' about a young girl trying to escape a labyrinth full of monsters. It looks brilliantly twisted and surreal, in a classic Roald Dahl sort of way, using a dollhouse perspective that makes the protagonist feel vulnerable as she sneaks among odd creatures, such as gigantic, bulbous chefs that look like inflated toad-people. That fantastic visual design has got us sold on *Hunger*. Now it's just a case of waiting to find out if the game is as compelling to play as it is aesthetically pleasing. We look forward to finding out...

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HOT TOPIC
VIRTUAL REALITY



LUKE ALBIGÉS
EDITOR, PLAY

"A BOLD STEP TOWARDS AN AWESOME FUTURE"

JUST LIKE WITH every other peripheral-based glimpse of the future, VR excites me. I don't care that the first wave of demos and games are unlikely to be perfect virtual reality experiences – I just want to be there on the front lines to get an advance preview of the future of gaming. It won't be great to begin with. These things never are. But without the baby steps into VR that we're going to see over the next few years, gaming simply isn't going to grow and evolve in any meaningful way. Games will get bigger, of course. They'll get prettier. But ultimately, the way in which we interact with them isn't going to change unless we get on board with the idea of embracing new experiences whenever they come along rather than dismissing them before they even have a chance to hit their stride.

The most important thing to bear in mind here is that VR isn't something that can just be slapped on top of existing games. The best virtual reality experiences will be those designed specifically with this level of immersion in mind, but it's not even like existing games *can* be quickly or easily patched for VR support. Whereas many modern games choose visual fidelity over top-end frame-rates and resolutions, that simply isn't an option when it comes to VR. If things aren't silky smooth and crystal clear, players will quickly grow nauseous due to the disconnect between real world and virtual movement, and getting games running for this isn't going to be an easy task. The 1080p display is right in front of your face, after all, so any and all imperfections are going to leap off the screen. You're not going to be able to simply strap on the headset and jump into magically VR-ified versions of your favourite games – these will be bespoke, tailor-made experiences, and that's definitely for the best.







As cool as the tech may be, any fool can see that it isn't something that be applied to all genres. What could games like *Street Fighter*, *Peggle* or *Resogun* possibly hope to achieve by embracing VR? The more abstract the concept, the less it will fit the VR vision and generally speaking, it's only first-person experiences that truly stand to benefit from this added level of immersion. Again, then, VR represents a new way to play and one that will not meddle too much in the existing experiences that you know and love. It's optional, it's forward-thinking and it's all kinds of cool.



△○×□ You might look like a tool while wearing the headset, but the experience is worth it.

As with any new tech, pricing is likely to be a serious issue in the early days. While Sony has yet to confirm a price point for Morpheus, predictions from the industry place it at a similar cost to the console itself. While some people will happily cough up for an up-close look at gaming's future, peripherals and expansions that cost almost the same at the hardware they complement haven't historically done terribly well. Morpheus is inevitably going to be a hard sell for Sony – unlike traditional games and hardware, this isn't something you can show off with screens or videos, rather something you have to experience first-hand in order to truly appreciate. This *is* the future, people. And while my first foray into the world of VR made it perfectly clear that we're not there yet, it's still a bloody interesting road we're walking right now.

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DARRAN JONES
EDITOR, RETRO GAMER

"VR IS NOT WITHOUT ITS SHARE OF ISSUES"

I'M A GAMING dinosaur (42-years old, in case you're asking) and I've seen a lot of different doobries when it comes to videogames. I saw the very first commercial videogame in its native habitat (*Pong*, in case you're asking), witnessed the rise of the 8-bit micro and was there on the front seats when the consoles came into power. I've seen a lot of jib-jobs, some good and some bad. I've also seen a lot of gimmicks, and that's what I'm seeing with Project Morpheus, another gimmick that will no doubt be impressive, but will inevitably take away from what I love about videogames.

It's important to remember that while all you youngsters are getting all flushed and excited about Project Morpheus, I've already seen and experienced virtual reality when it first came around. It had all the issues then that Project Morpheus is also going to encounter – namely a decent array of games and an effective, sensible cost. I'd love to say Sony is going to sidestep those problems, but as it's currently in full arrogance mode, it's going to make exactly the same mistakes. History repeats itself you see. And after working on Retro Gamer for the past ten years, you see the same patterns appear over and over again.





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△○×□ Sony's device uses the PS Camera for head tracking and can be used with Move for motion control.

Now I've not played on Project Morpheus, but I have experienced Oculus Rift. It's good, f**king good in fact, but it's not without its share of issues. It's extremely power intensive, requiring an expensive PC to get games running at that magic 60fps and it made me feel a little nauseous after around ten minutes of play. Now that's no good for me. I don't want to feel ill playing a videogame, and I don't want to fall off a f**king chair because I'm so immersed in a videogame that I'm prepared to potentially damage myself, and I certainly don't want my core experience broken because of a shonky frame-rate –which will happen when you consider how many PS4 games struggle to hit 30fps. Most of all, though, I don't want to pay £300 for a f**king peripheral, which in this day and age is a joke of epic proportions. Now I know that a firm price hasn't been given yet and speculation is between £200 and £300, but even £200 feels too much for a device that you know won't be properly supported and I'm betting £300, because let's face it, Sony is a big corporation and big corporations are greedy.

And why do I know that it won't be properly supported? Because I've been gaming for over 35 years and peripherals rarely, if ever, get

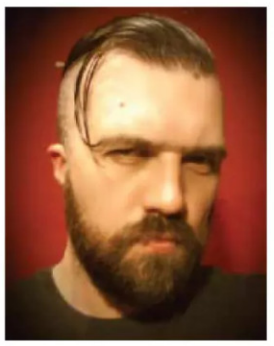


support once the publisher has got its money. Take Kinect, for example. It's been a success in terms of sales, but where are the games now? Where is Kinect now? Up Microsoft's arse, that's where. When it comes to Morpheus, I've not been impressed by many of the games on show so far, so unless there's some sort of take on *Afrika* where I can stare at animals and birds to my heart's content, I'm unlikely to jump in.

I was immersed in a maze as *Pac-Man* in 1986 and was battling giant Mechs at London's Trocadero in the mid Nineties, so I just can't get excited about doing the same thing with slightly better visuals and built-in motion control in today's world. But I'm a gaming dinosaur in videogame terms, so what do I know? Everything, that's what.









DIGITAL BARDS

Videogame stories have come a long way since the times of text crawls, but have they gone in the right direction? Paul Walker-Emig speaks to devs about the challenges they face when telling us their tales

"I think videogames are pretty terrible for telling stories," Jonathan Blow, the man behind *Braid* and *The Witness*, tells us. A provocative statement and one that we expect most players and developers would react to with hostility, but he puts forward a compelling argument.

Blow suggests that games that place a large focus on story are 'inherently conflicted', pointing out that a game's story and mechanics often clash. "The story of *Bioshock* presents to you this supposed dilemma," Blow says, picking out an example. "You need to kill these Little Sisters, and take away this resource that you can use to get strong and survive, but at the same time, you want to care about them, because they're just little girls who don't deserve to be mistreated. So you have this decision," Blow continues. "Do I be altruistic and take care of them and save their lives, or do I do what I need to do to make it through the game and survive? The game is trying to say that. But at the same time, the designers of the game thought it was important for the game to be balanced," he explains. "No matter what you do to the Little Sisters, you'll always get about the same amount of resource and players notice this very quickly. The author of the story says, 'these Little Sisters are very important and you should care about them,' and on the other hand, the author of the game's design says, 'well, you can pretty much do what you want, it doesn't matter either way.'"

In Blow's view, there's too much focus on those elements we traditionally think of as comprising a game's story and not enough attention paid to what a game's mechanics are telling us outside of that. "Any system communicates something to the player," Blow says, "whether you as the author of the game intended to communicate that thing or not. The gameplay does this regardless – it's not necessarily just the story or the visual assets."

Blow might not think that videogames are a particularly good vehicle for story, then, but he accepts that they communicate something to the player nonetheless. There are two questions that ask themselves in relation to Blow's statements. If developers can communicate with their audience through mechanics, does that not mean that we might just have to think about telling stories in videogames in a different way, rather than writing off their ability to do so entirely? Secondly, are the problems that Blow points to with videogame storytelling obstacles that cannot be overcome, or are they issues that have to be acknowledged and worked around creatively?

Greg Kasavin of Supergiant Games, the team behind *Bastion* and *Transistor* seems to lean towards the

latter. "I think there's limitless territory to explore when it comes to using game mechanics to tell stories in games," Kasavin says. "It's very fertile ground, though also tends to create some big challenges both in a game's design and during its production. But to me, it's the entire point of making games."

"Pacing is a big challenge for games whose goal is to deliver story in a traditional way," Kasavin says, pointing out that interactivity takes some control out of the hands of the storyteller. "That storytelling style can be at odds with how games tend to put up obstacles for the player to overcome. It's frustrating to get to a point in a game when you're anxious to know what happens next in the story but hit a difficulty spike you can't get past. Conversely, there are stories that start very strong but tend to fall by the wayside as the game's mechanics take over, and lose your motivation to keep playing," he continues.

So, how should games deal with that? One solution is to avoid the cinema influenced, linear approach to telling stories. Take the likes of *Minecraft* and *DayZ*, for example. They "have a lot of world context but no authored story content, yet nonetheless they generate rich story-like experiences personal to each player," in Kasavin's words. "Chasing after the visual fidelity and storytelling techniques of cinema begins to yield some diminishing returns when it comes at the expense of good visual feedback or interactivity," Kasavin continues. "Interactivity is the aspect of games that most sets them apart as a medium so I think trading off that interactivity for the sake of cinematic presentation ought to be done with a great deal of care and restraint."



△○×□ *TLOU* portrayed a brutal and tragic world with skill and nuance.

"INTERACTIVITY IS THE ASPECT OF VIDEOGAMES THAT SETS THEM APART"





△○×□ Open world games like *Dying Light* are a challenge for storytellers.

That doesn't mean that Kasavin thinks we should throw cinematic storytelling out the window entirely, pointing out as he does that there's no one solution as to how videogames should approach storytelling. "I think there will always be room for a broad spectrum of types of stories in games," he says. "You can have these very cinematic, authored experiences like *The Last Of Us*."

Indeed, for Techland writer Rafał Orkan, who worked on *Dying Light* and *Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger*, it's important for developers to think about how their method of storytelling should be tweaked to ensure it is appropriate to the kind of game they are making, rather

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than relying on one catch-all solution. "In more linear games, creators can afford an almost movie-like plot," Orkan explains. "You can precisely predict the pace at which the story will unfold, shape events and anticipate emotions that will accompany them."

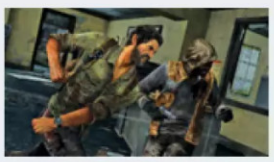
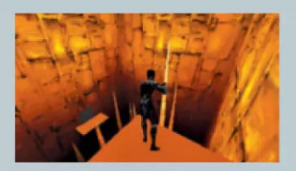
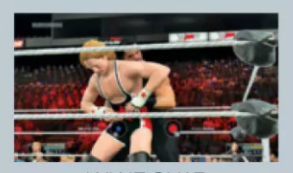
The same approach doesn't work for open-world games, however. "You've got to forget about controlling the timing or pace," Orkan says. "Writers for open-world games have to avoid many traps and invest as much time in designing the story as to overcoming those obstacles. For instance, will a fast and aggressive player understand the story in the same or similar way as a person who plays slowly and carefully? Will a character's motivation be clear to someone who spends most of the time on side-quests and goes back to the main storyline after long breaks?" he asks. "There're many more such pitfalls, so whether you like it or not, when you write a script for an open-world game, you have to change your approach to storytelling."

From Kasavin's assertion that there's "limitless territory to explore" when it comes to storytelling, though to Orkan's suggestion that "our medium demands a variety of inspirations and a broader look at the art of storytelling," our interviewees seem to agree that there's room for evolution in videogame storytelling. Certainly, we should expect more than what Blow describes as "the typical triple-A" approach. That is to say, "cut-scenes interrupted by gameplay bits that get you to the next cut-scene," which, in Blow's view, "sucks".

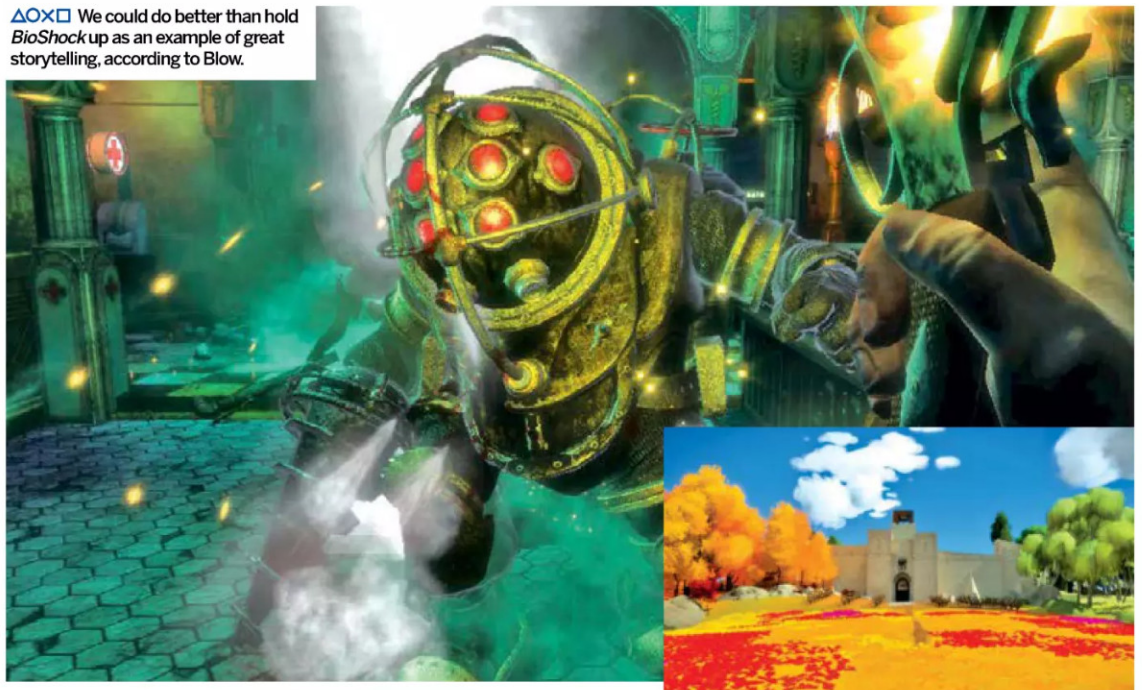
What are some of the ways in which we can expect videogame storytelling to progress, then? Surely, if it is to improve, developers have to acknowledge the potential conflict between mechanics and story highlighted by Blow at the start of this piece, think more carefully about how mechanics can be used in service of storytelling, and experiment with how the two can be used together.

Take the way *Transistor* gives each of its Functions (or abilities) a narrative context and encourages you to experiment with them to learn more as an example. "Throughout *Transistor's* development, we were looking for ways to compel or even force players to experiment with different Transistor Functions, as opposed to getting into a comfort zone using the same Functions

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△○×□ We could do better than hold *BioShock* up as an example of great storytelling, according to Blow.











△○×□ *Bastion*'s use of a narrator was inspired by literature.





△○×□ Giving players a choice as to how a story will progress marks out videogames from other media.

over and over," explains Kasavin. "At the same time, it was very important to me from a narrative standpoint to build up the Transistor's significance in the world, and the significance of the various Functions in the game.

"Connecting the player's experimentation with the Transistor's Functions with the discovery of more background information on the world just made a lot of sense to me as a subtle reward for greater investment," Kasavin says. "It's an aspect of the game that came together late in development but I'm very glad it happened."

"My narrative experiment at Techland was *Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger*," Orkan says. "Our starting point was the concept of a narrator who used a retrospective story – told live throughout the game – to communicate the plot to players the same way he did to his in-game listeners. We soon realized we could expand that concept even more, so we incorporated our gameplay mechanics into the storytelling," explains Orkan. "We made the game's world change according to words of the unreliable narrator or his listeners, who can't help but interrupt him: either by elaborating on some parts of his story or contradicting him and telling their own versions of the events.

"In *Gunslinger*, narration and gameplay are inseparably connected and one cannot exist without the other. I believe video games are in need of such experiments," Orkan concludes.

Surely, this move towards ensuring mechanics and story enhance and reflect one another is crucial to the growth of videogame storytelling and the direction in which things should be heading? Perhaps, but as Blow points out, ironing out conflicts between story and mechanics is easier said than done.

"It's like pressing bubbles out of wallpaper. You press one down and another one pops up over here. You end up changing aspects of the story that don't fit the gameplay and changing aspects of the gameplay that don't fit the story. triple-A production models make this very, very difficult," Blow continues, arguing that it's just not practical to make significant changes to a game that's been developed at great cost over a number of years. "Good luck convincing a team to make huge sweeping changes because some solitary dude says that there's a conflict between the gameplay and the story," Blow says.

A challenge it may be, but whether it's one that can be overcome is open to debate. Fittingly, each of our interviewees tells us a different story when it comes to the conflicted state of videogame storytelling, its future and the prospect of addressing the kinds of challenges outlined above.

For Blow, "storytelling in games is in about the same place it was in the Eighties, except now our cut-scenes are much more frequent and in high resolution." He seems to suggest that the future lies in thinking about how rules of interaction can be used to express themes, rather than focusing on telling stories per se, for which he suggests other mediums might be better suited.

Kasavin, on the other hand, has a more positive outlook on the potential of videogames to tell stories. "I think great

PLOT TWISTS The games that changed the story

METAL GEAR SOLID



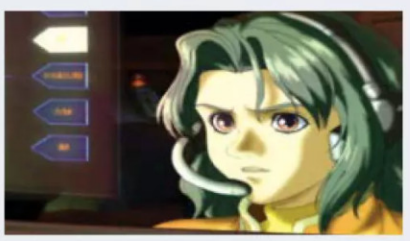
Its not the first videogame to be cinematic, but it helped cement its influence by implementing it with such panache.

THE WALKING DEAD



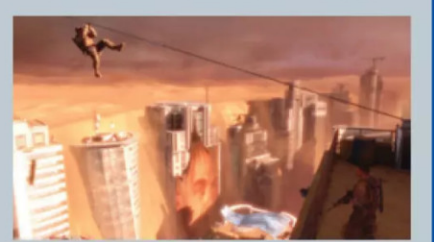
Following in the footsteps of *Mass Effect* and *Deus Ex*, *The Walking Dead* has made player-influenced storytelling incredibly fashionable.

XENOGEARS



Epic scale, stupid hair and nonsensical story beats – *Xenogears* helped form the template for the PlayStation JRPG.

SPEC OPS: THE LINE



Joining the likes of *Hotline Miami*, *Spec Ops* is a game that questioned the precepts of videogame storytelling.

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△○×□ The episodic take on storytelling is in vogue right now.

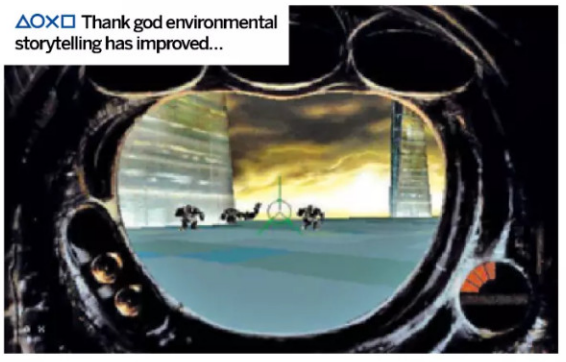


△○×□ An expertly crafted, unsettling atmosphere helped *BioShock*'s story to grab us.



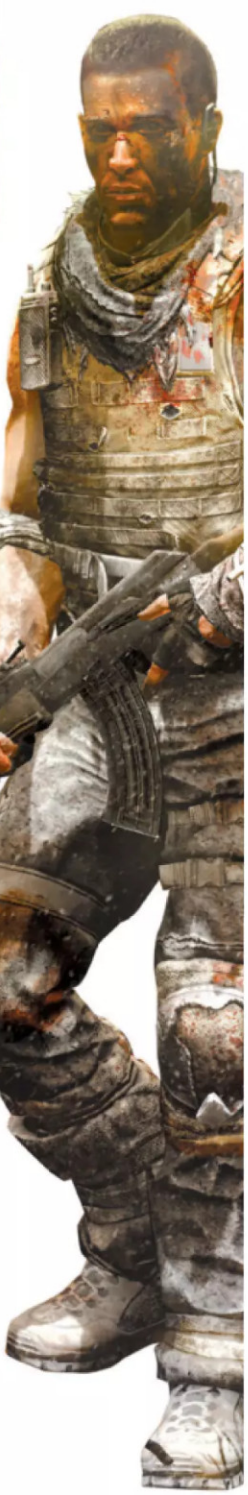


△○×□ *The Last Of Us* really knows how to tug at the heartstrings.



△○×□ Thank god environmental storytelling has improved...





"TODAY, THERE'S A LARGER APPRECIATION FOR WHAT HIGHER-QUALITY STORYTELLING IN GAMES CAN DO"

storytelling has existed in games for as long as games have existed," he says. "When I was a little kid playing *Ultima IV* and *Karateka* on my Apple IIC, I saw first-hand the potential of storytelling in games. I think today there's a larger and broader appreciation for what higher-quality storytelling in games can do, and I think there's a greater focus on the craft, from the writing to the voice acting and so on," he continues.

In Orkan's view, the kinds of developments outlined by Kasavin place videogame storytelling in a stronger position that it's ever been. "In my opinion, the improvement is noticeable" he says. "The role of storytelling in games is taken more and more seriously; plot is no longer just a background for gameplay but very often one of key pillars of the production process."

Orkan also sees plenty of room for improvement in videogame storytelling, however. He says a positive trend is evident in the medium's increasing willingness to "tackle important issues", but sees other areas that requite attention. "I personally believe sexist traits are still present in stories, so I believe liberating female characters from those old clichés should be one of the priorities for videogame storytellers," Orkan tells us. However, he goes on to suggest that "freeing oneself from such thinking patterns is not as easy as it may seem."

That last statement seems particularly prescient to us. We may well accept that videogames need to experiment with new forms of storytelling and take a much more sophisticated approach to marrying mechanics and story, but, to paraphrase Orkan, for videogame storytellers to free themselves from the traditional thinking patterns and modes of doing things may not be as easy it sounds. Here's hoping the industry's finest are up to the task...



★★★★★ TEN OF THE BEST ★★★★★ SOUNDTRACKS

SOUNDTRACKS ARE AN OFTEN-OVERLOOKED ELEMENT IN VIDEOGAMES. A GREAT SOUNDTRACK CAN BE AS IMPORTANT AND MEMORABLE AS VISUALS OR MECHANICS



TRANSISTOR

GIVEN THAT THIS is a game that puts you in the shoes of a professional singer, you kind of expect a great soundtrack. Fortunately, *Transistor* delivers on this, delighting with a fantastic blend of jazz and electronica that fits perfectly with the game's Art Nouveau cyberpunk world. There are some wonderful moments in this game where narrative beats, visuals and gameplay, are threaded together flawlessly with the game's music. It's even got a 'hum' button.



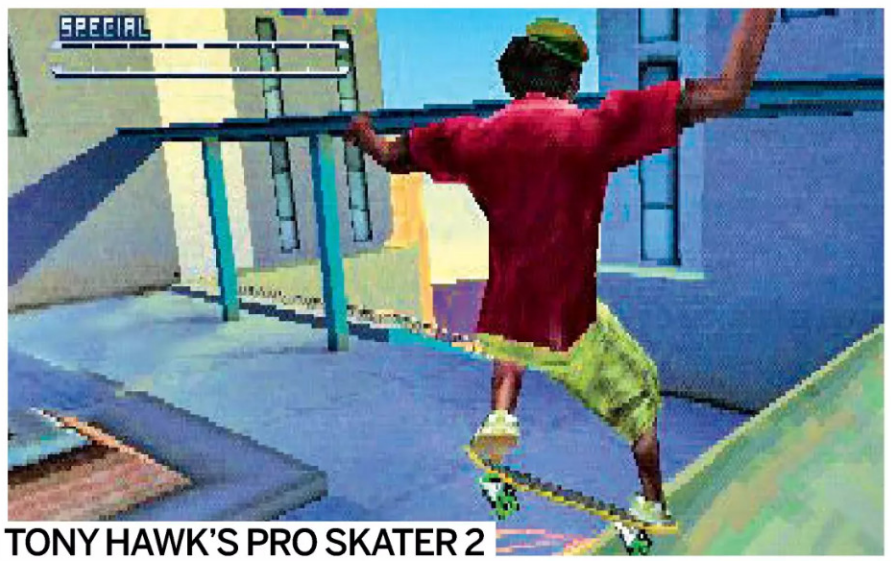
FEZ

HERE WE HAVE something evocative of games from the past, yet something original at the same time and the same can be said of its soundtrack. Its chiptune inspirations mean that the game's music has a sense of nostalgia about it, but it is also very different to anything you would have heard from the era of games that inspired it. There's something ethereal and otherworldly about these tracks and that dovetails beautifully with the sense of mystery that *Fez* fosters throughout.



PERSONA 4 GOLDEN

WE'RE ALMOST EMBARRASSED to argue that a soundtrack that can be as cheesy as this should be considered one of the best. *Almost*. Yes, it's got a bunch of poppy and trashy tunes, but they are so exuberant and cheerful that you just can't help but be brought along for the ride. *Persona 4 Golden* is a colourful and eccentric game and its soundtrack reflects that with an array of catchy and memorable songs.



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

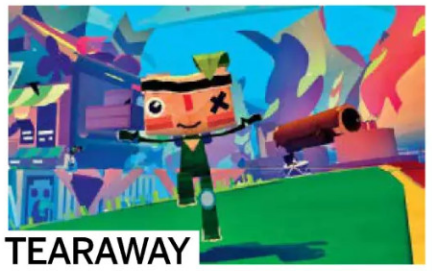
FAMED AS THEY are for their awesome soundtracks, it was difficult to choose from the first three *Tony Hawk*'s games. *Blitzkrieg Bop* almost swung it in favour of *Tony Hawk's 3*, but it is *Tony Hawk's 2* soundtrack that takes the prize, courtesy of the likes of Rage Against The Machine, Bad Religion and Anthrax. Nothing captures skating more perfectly than a compilation of skate-punk, hip-hop and metal that encapsulates the era.

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METAL GEAR SOLID

IT HAS A pretty good soundtrack overall, but let's be honest, it's the main theme of *Metal Gear Solid* that really stands out. That rousing, iconic composition is one of the most recognisable in gaming. Revisited throughout the entire *MGS* series, it's a classic track that's stood the test of time and that remains one of our favourite videogame themes ever. Indeed, as good as all the *MGS* soundtracks might be – from the first game, through to the most recent – it's hard to look past that one memorable song.



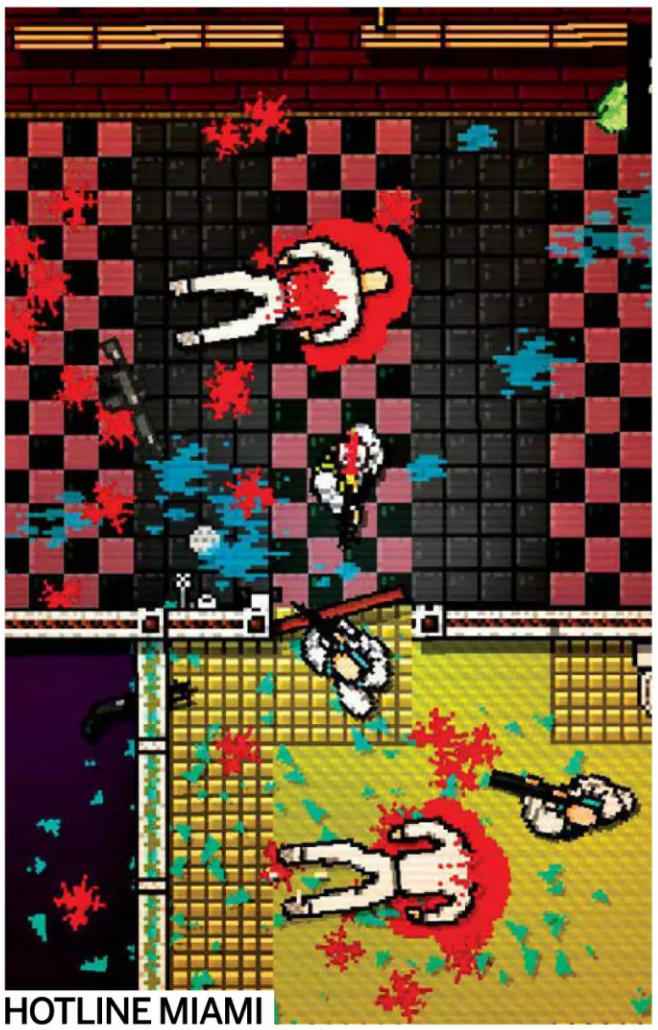
TEARAWAY

A VIDEOGAME'S MUSIC is usually at its best when it feels somehow in concert with the world that you are exploring. Such is the case with the brilliant *Tearaway*. As you move throughout the game's wonderful papercraft world, the soundtrack changes to reflect each area and its gameplay scenarios perfectly. Characteristically, the soundtrack is fun and full of life, making inhabiting *Tearaway*'s world as much a pleasure as every other aspect of the game.



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

IF YOU'RE PLAYING a *GTA* game, chances are that the airwaves are packed with an array of excellent tunes to choose from. Indeed, the fact that you can find an in-game radio station that suits your tastes makes the game's soundtrack all the better. Arguably the best *GTA* game when it comes to music is *Vice City*. That game's soundtrack perfectly captured the essence of Eighties Miami and that, after all, was precisely what the game was trying to do. From Kool & The Gang and Michael Jackson, through to Iron Maiden and Grandmaster Flash, *Vice City* is packed full of Eighties goodness.



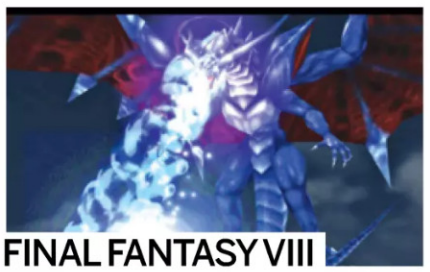
HOTLINE MIAMI

THERE MUST BE something special about games set in Miami when it comes to music, because here we've got ourselves another prime candidate for the title of 'Best Videogame Soundtrack'. *Hotline Miami*'s soundtrack is a crucial part of what makes that game work. Those pulsating tunes help to create a trance-like feeling as you tear your way through the game's levels. The music fits the game so perfectly that you'd think it was tailor made, but, the songs are all existing tracks selected by developer Dennaton Games. The developer delivered more this year, with *Hotline Miami 2* also having a banger of a soundtrack.



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

THE MUSIC OF composer Ennio Morricone is inseparable from the great Westerns, playing in our heads whenever we think of classics such as *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*. A game inspired by the genre needed a soundtrack that riffed on those classics and *Red Dead Redemption* obliged. How fitting it is that one of *Redemption*'s most famous scenes is inseparable from the song that accompanies it: the ride into Mexico set to Jose Gonzales' *Far Away*.



FINAL FANTASY VIII

WE COULD HAVE picked just about any *Final Fantasy* game to be in this list, because they've all got brilliant soundtracks, courtesy of one of gaming's great composers, Nobuo Uematsu. Those orchestral scores form a fundamental part of our *FF* memories and had to gain a place on the list in one form or another. We almost plumped for *FFVII* but, as good as it is, there's an element of nostalgia talking there. Instead, we've gone for the excellent *FFVIII* soundtrack.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW REVIEWS

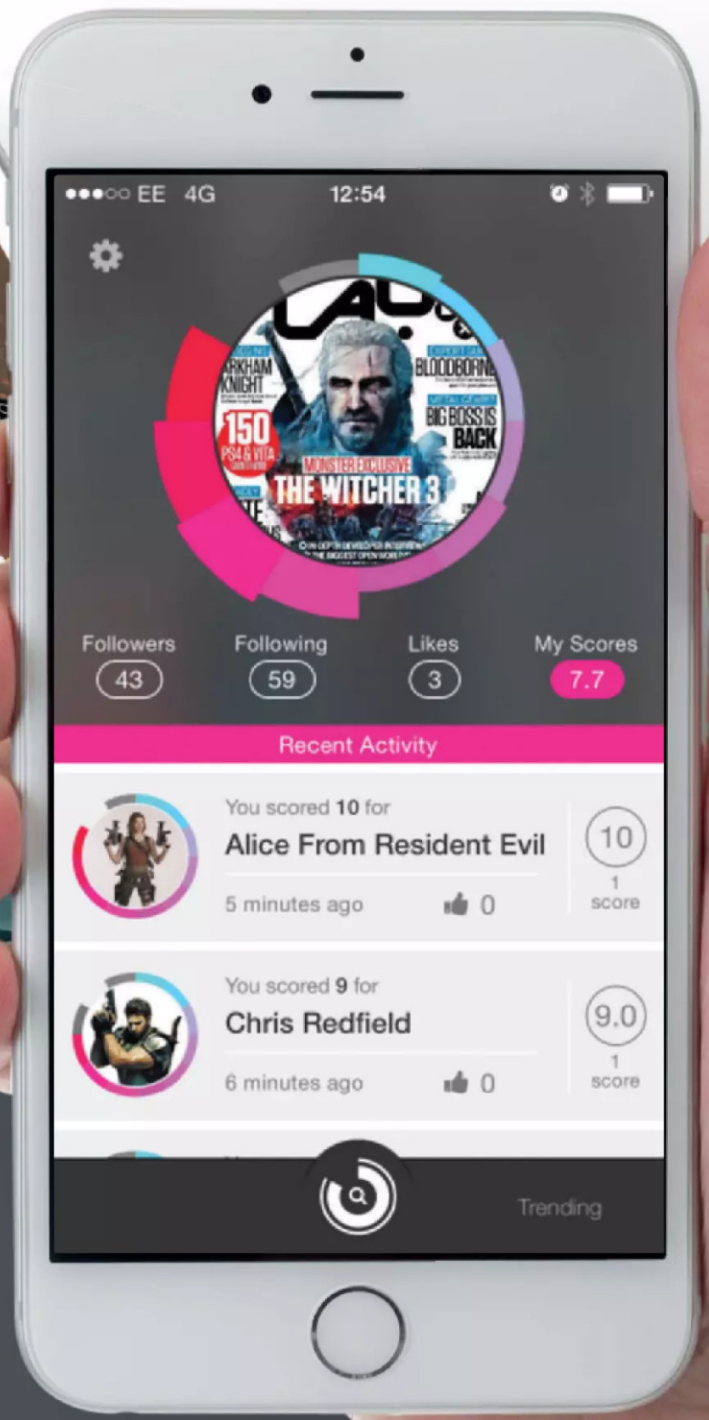
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Luke Albigés
Editor

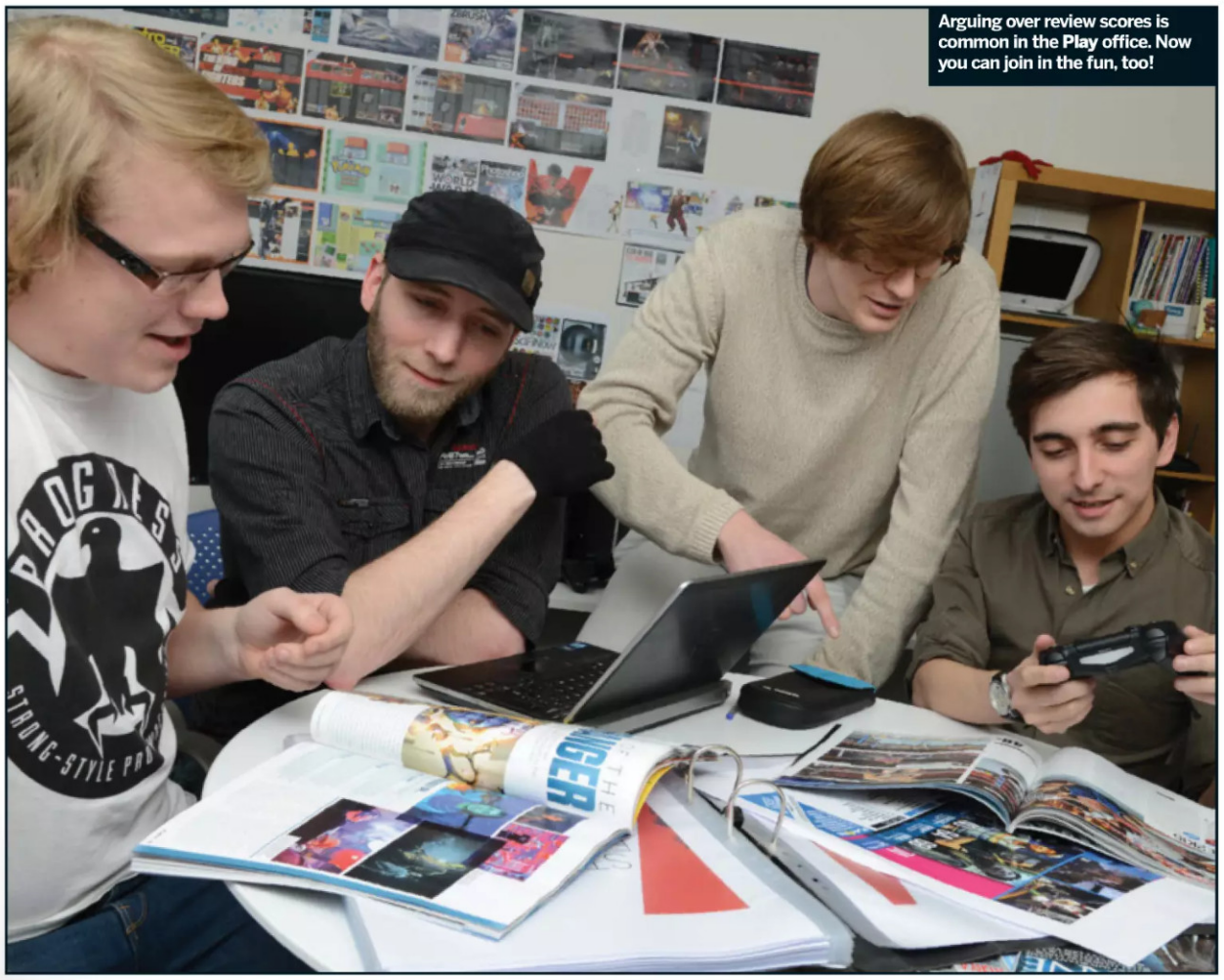
As much as we love to wax lyrical about the latest PS4 releases, it's long been the case that a lot of players deal purely in numbers. If you're part of this new, connected, no-nonsense generation, you'll love Just A Score – the new social scoring app we'll be using to dish out ratings from now on. You can follow us, see trending topics, check our scores and even share your own opinions on anything you like. Don't miss out on the fun – get involved today!





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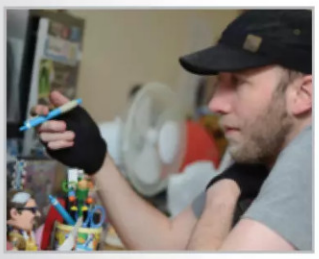
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Scoring S.T.A.R.S.

Love Barry Burton? Can't get enough of Wesker? Let the world know! We took to Just A Score to pass judgement on *Resident Evil*'s classic characters...

10 PlayMag_UK scored **10** for Barry Burton

10 PlayMag_UK scored **10** for Alice From *Resident Evil*

9 PlayMag_UK scored **9** for Chris Redfield

8 PlayMag_UK scored **8** for Leon S. Kennedy

6 PlayMag_UK scored **6** for Jill Valentine

3 PlayMag_UK scored **3** for Carlos Oliveira



"UNLIKE TELLTALE'S PRETEND MORAL CHOICES, YOU ACTUALLY GET TO DECIDE HOW MUCH THINGS MATTER HERE"



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△○×□ This guy used to have a head. Now he doesn't. Probably shouldn't have pissed off Geralt, eh?



The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt

The arrow to Skyrim's knee

PS4

A LOT HAS been made of the scale of *The Witcher 3* in the run-up to release, and with good reason. To call this game 'pretty big' is like describing the moon as being 'quite far away', and without courting hyperbole, there's no accurate way of describing the sandbox CD Projekt Red has laid on for this epic RPG. It's stupid, frankly, just how big this game is and if you should decide to avoid the bulletin boards that fill in the blanks on the map and turn off the objective markers, it's fair to say that you'll be lost for *months* – if not *years* – in this sublime fantasy world. And we'd wager a fair amount of coin that you wouldn't regret a single second, either.

Whereas *GTA V* starts you out smack in the middle of its biting satire of big city life and culture, *The Witcher 3* instead dangles its well-realised urban 'metropolis' (if such a term can even be applied to a place where buildings are quite probably held together by little more than shit and dreams) as something to strive for, just as the game's poor are likely looking to do in order to escape their pitiful existences in the wilds. While our hero may be exempt from it on paper, this is a world of suffering, of acceptance, of putting up with less-than-ideal circumstances and playing the long game. And it's all the better for it, even though our stoic hero may not notice such at first.

A tricky combination of a lack of exit play and rampant poverty leads many NPCs to put their life's savings on the line in order to have closure, or justice, or vengeance, or whatever, seen through to the bitter end. Unlike Telltale's pretend moral choices, you actually get to decide how much this matters here – Geralt is supposed to be this stone-hearted mercenary, sure, but countless decisions will draw you in and even make you question and shift the witcher's stance on issues, often to the point that morality is being played against you as some kind of trump card. Every neutral choice you make seems emotionally detached from the perspective of the characters you're learning to love; every

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Bandai Namco

DEVELOPER
CD Projekt Red

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
18

TWITTER
@WitcherGame









invested choice makes you feel too involved with the side in question. There's no black and white here – the game is one seething mass of grey area and the more the story is allowed to play out, the more you realise just how much your binary moralising may have screwed you over. Indeed, certain events seem designed to highlight poor judgement towards seemingly positive characters and others towards negative ones. Learning who you can trust and who you can't is the lesson here, and it must be said that learning the hard way is often the most fulfilling.

Fortunately, combat isn't something you'll have to learn the hard way, since most will already be adept in this form of battle. Controls have been tightened up a hell of a lot since the franchise last appeared on console and the result is something that sits between the accessibility of *Assassin's Creed* and *Batman: Arkham* games, and the *Souls* series. Juxtaposed as the two forms may seem, it actually works – parry timing is more demanding than anything in *AC*, for instance, but still relaxed enough to support the idea that Geralt is supposed to be a master swordsman. It's the usual two-button action combat set-up, with light and heavy attacks joined by evasive manoeuvres, ranged options and even a little magic. Depleting a foe's stamina will cause them to drop their guard (a crucial trick to exploit against bastards that hide behind shields), and a perfect parry can also give you the opening you need to land a killing blow. As in the *Arkham* games and their many copycats, there's a satisfying rhythm and flow to encounters, a comprehensive bank of perks available under the hood allowing you to tailor combat to the way you want to play. All five Signs have their uses in different

> "THERE IS NO BLACK AND WHITE HERE – THE GAME IS ONE SEETHING MASS OF GREY AREA"



△○×□ Killing enemies in certain ways can trigger brutal execution animations like this. They're ace.





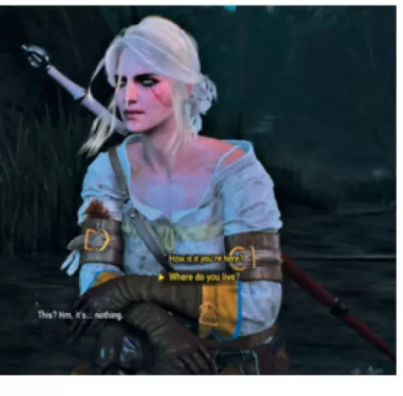
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△○×□ Magic trinkets can grant Geralt all kinds of special powers, including the ability to communicate with the dead.





situations but levelling them all simply isn't practical, making it important to quickly identify and grow the few that best fit your play style. Signs also see a little use outside of combat, breaking objects to reveal secrets or even using Axii to pull Jedi mind tricks on fools, something you can become really quite adept at with a few well-placed upgrades.

Using Axii to charm your way out of sticky situations is just one example of CDPR's impressively flexible approach to quest design. Action-RPGs frequently fall into the trap of relying on repetitive fetch quests and mob hunts and while there's a lot more variety here in terms of tasks, even those that sail closer to the standard template offer interesting quirks and options, many even presenting non-violent solutions to problems a blade initially seems deigned to fix. Bribery, mind tricks, subterfuge, counterfeiting, charm, favours... you name it, chances are you can do or use it at some point to get out of a fight and conversely, trying to worm your way out of something can sometimes simply serve to make it worse. CDPR takes things to the other extreme on occasion too, making great use of Geralt's heightened senses for tracking



LEARN TO PLAY GWENT

A crash course in The Witcher 3's addictive card game



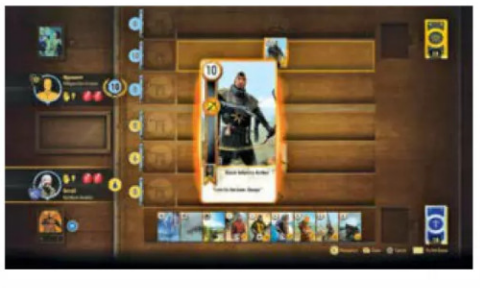
1 Gwent is a competitive card game where two players pit their armies – decks of 22 or more cards divided into five unique factions – against one another in a best-of-three format. Here's the twist, though: you only have your initial hand of ten cards to play across all three rounds, meaning tactical pacing is crucial.



2 Geralt's starting deck is a Northern Realms set, meaning you get to draw a card after a winning round. You should look to take the first round, as doing so will give you a boost. Try to make your opponent waste cards in the second while keeping your hand up, which should make the last round easy to take.



3 Tactical use of weather effects is vital to success. Frost cripples front line fighters, fog ruins ranged units and rain wrecks siege cards. If it looks like an opponent is filling up one of the three lanes, you should look to cripple it with the relevant weather effect, but only when the time is right.



4 When building a deck, don't get rid of *all* of your weaker cards. These are key in making opponents pass early, giving you opportunities to go in for the kill with powerful units. Similarly, don't ditch any of your special cards early on – mid-power units should be the first to go to make room for stronger recruits.



△○×□ Find a Place Of Power and you'll get a free upgrade point. Spend it wisely...



"GERALT IS FLUNG HEADLONG INTO THE MIDST OF SOME SERIOUS ISSUES"





△○×□ Geralt isn't the only witcher here, but he's easily the coolest.

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NO MORE MR NICE GUY

If you plan on streaming *The Witcher 3*, it's probably a good idea to decide early on what kind of chap you want your Geralt to be. Viewers will likely be more interested to see you play as a specific kind of character – emotionless hard-ass, charitable hero, fight-picking prick or whatever – but don't assume that means you can't chuck out the odd curveball. Some situations will naturally push Geralt to act out of character, so take these moments to deliver your own little plot twists. You could even open dialogue options up to your viewers, if you don't mind the idea of the general public ruining your game...





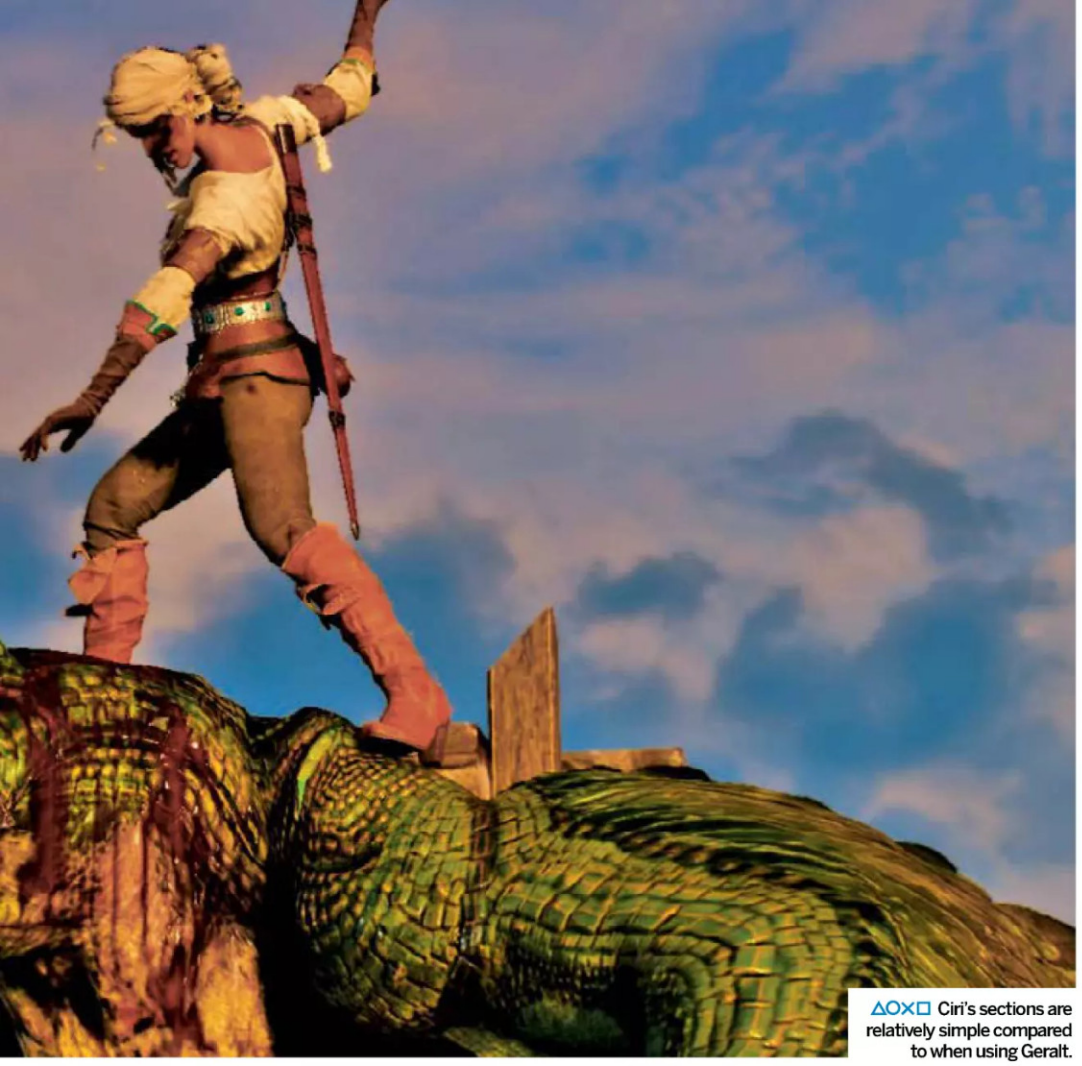


missions that feel fresh and chucking expert curveballs with mission types destined to blindside anyone who goes in purely expecting to hunt monsters.

Equally bold is the team's unwavering dedication to complex and mature subject matter, but even more impressive is that there's rarely a misstep in how they are handled. Geralt is flung headlong into the midst of some *serious* issues and generally speaking, both the issues themselves and the characters involved are presented in as respectful and believable manner as you'd hope. There will inevitably be the same kind of outrage directed at *The Witcher 3* that so many mature games receive when notable moments are taken out of context but in the game, nothing is any more gratuitous than you want to make it – if you will frequent medieval bathhouses and brothels or have Geralt talk a special someone into the sack, you should really expect the punchline to be of the adult

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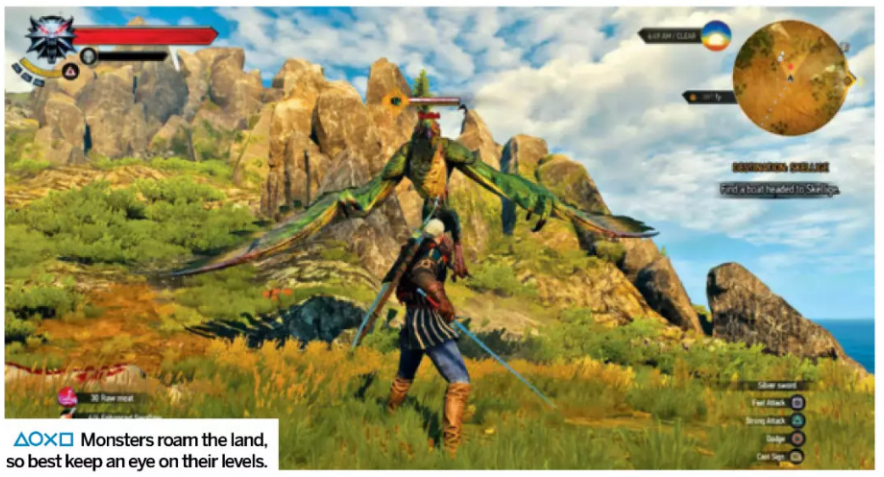


△○×□ Ciri's sections are relatively simple compared to when using Geralt.









△○×□ Monsters roam the land, so best keep an eye on their levels.

variety. Sex, drugs, violence, crime... it's all here and it's wonderful to see that CDPR is capable of both addressing and dealing with these topics in a relatively mature manner and yet still finding time to be playful with them on rare occasions, almost like *GTA* does but with far less liberal use of the Satire Hammer.

It's not often that we get as excited for locations as we do for the people and events that fill them but exploring this giant of a game has elicited just that feeling of wonder in us. There's a genuine sense of place to this world, fostered by believable mapping, smart use of regional dialects and rich variety. Approach Novigrad and buildings grow fancier, quality of life improves, patrols get more common and wild monsters grow sparse, these observations building the closer you get to the game's main city. Similarly, swamplands and mountainous areas tend to be much more treacherous than well-trodden country roads, thick with beasts and hazards and only populated by the hardened, the insane and the impoverished. Regional differences can be as little as a quick canter away and come in all shapes and sizes, from new flora and fauna to discover to a completely different cultural standpoint on key political issues that makes people interact with you very differently to those in other settlements, often also based on your choices and actions up to that point.

On pretty much every level, *The Witcher 3* is a remarkable achievement. Its world is massive and a genuine thrill to explore; characters and dialogue are entertaining and engaging; missions are so varied as to put the game's peers to shame; combat strikes the perfect blend of simplicity and depth; optional material can extend the length of the game to hundreds of hours and comes in all shapes, sizes and flavours. Oh, and it looks amazing, with only the odd slight chug during busy moments and areas detracting from its visual splendour. If this adventure drags you in as it has us, you won't need to buy another game for months – this superb RPG adventure will be all you need. A game about hunting monsters that we absolutely love... who'd have thought it, right?

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Quality like this doesn't tend to arrive until way later in a generation, so we doff our caps to the team at CDPR for breaking tradition to deliver one of the best RPGs we've ever played.

10
PlayMag_UK scored **10** for
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE







ΔOX□ It's all fun and games until somebody loses an... never mind, looks like we're too late.

Mortal Kombat X

You've got red on you



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Warner Bros.

DEVELOPER
NetherRealm

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-8

AGE RATING
18+

TWITTER
@MortalKombat

Trophies 61

1 1 5 54

PS4

ALSO ON PS3

WE'VE LONG ENJOYED *Mortal Kombat* as a form of entertainment, but it has never been a good fighting game. Go back and play the early games and they're clumsy, ugly pastiches of the Capcom and SNK greats that still hold up today, only made novel by the ability to eviscerate or humiliate your opponent upon victory. It took years for Ed Boon and his team to get the memo that said we wouldn't mind some decent gameplay to go along with that shock factor, but the 2011 reboot at least showed steps in the right direction – it was still a mess, but a more versatile combo system meant that there was at least some room for skilled play, and the game marked the franchise's first outing among the competitive elite at tournaments like Evo. Landing the DC license for *Injustice* meant NetherRealm had to step up its game and the results spoke for themselves – the team had produced a fighting game that the community could take (relatively) seriously. We're delighted, then, that *MKX* shares more with the DC fighter than with its predecessors – for the first time in the series, *Mortal Kombat X* is a fighter that has more than just comedy value going for it. It's actually a *good* fighter now.

The first step on this road to top tier status was streamlining the roster and while fans who have lost a main in the cut may disagree, we'd argue that *MKX*'s character line-up is all the stronger for it. Gone are the days of palette-swap ninjas and colourful robots – every one of *X*'s 24 stock fighters is unique in terms of both design and combat style. Stripping out a lot of duplicates has also made room for plenty of new blood, and there's a lot to like about *MK*'s new generation of heroes. Perhaps best of all is the fact that many of them don't even fit easily into the usual fighting game character archetypes – D'vorah blends speedy rushdown attacking with traps and a fair ranged game, Cassie favours a mixup-heavy aggressive approach but can also zone relatively effectively, Erron Black seems like a ranged specialist but also has one of the best high/low games going... even the big guy doesn't have to play to hard-hitting expectations, as Ferra/Torr can be better at dealing with projectile spam than a large character has any right to be,



"EVERY CHARACTER NOW COMES IN THREE FLAVOURS, THE VARIANT YOU CHOOSE GRANTING ACCESS TO EXCLUSIVE MOVES, COMBOS AND PERKS"



△○×□ We don't have an awful lot of time for Scorpion, but even we can't deny that this flaming Brutality looks pretty damn awesome...

depending on which variant you choose. They really do make all the difference.

That's the other major factor here, actually. Every character now comes in three flavours, the variant you choose granting access to exclusive moves, combos and perks. Some benefit little from this but, in more extreme cases, it's like having three different characters to pick from. Newcomers Takeda and Kung Jin showcase this better than most – Takeda's Ronin style is focused on close-range combat, while Lasher gives him far better spacing tools and mid-screen punishes and Shirai Ryu basically turns him into a Scorpion clone, while Kung Jin (arguably the best character in the game at the time of going to press) can do a mean *UMVC3* Hawkeye impression for a great keepaway game or go full ham with his staff for rushdown depending on which you select. It really is a game-changer, and it's worth spending time with all three once you settle on a character to see which best gels with your play style. You might even find that a particular variant on a character you never even liked clicks better than you'd expect – Bojutsu Kung Jin was a damage-dealing epiphany for us while Kano's Cutthroat and Commando styles both offer tools that make us like the idea of a character we haven't thought twice about since his 1992 debut.

As a NetherRealm game, it should come as no surprise that *MKX* is packed with solo content. It's kind of an unwritten rule that these guys always have to deliver a comprehensive single-player package and unsurprisingly, the team has done an outstanding job. There's a stupid story mode to enjoy, Towers galore to throw yourself at and even a rotating set of challenges thanks to the Living Towers. These are challenges that change on a weekly, daily and even hourly basis, leaderboard battles that give solo play the same kind of importance as direct multiplayer competition and they're oddly addictive – NetherRealm even went a step further with Tower Battles, an ingenious way of letting players challenge online opponents without directly confronting them, by pitting all entrants against the same Tower of CPU battles and seeing who comes out on top. Online players are equally well catered for, although the netcode isn't all it could be right now. Defending against simple high/low mixups and guaranteed punishes on unsafe moves don't work out as they should unless your online opponent is within spitting distance, which we hope is patchable as the actual modes and content on offer make us want to keep coming back, as much as the scrubby, latency-abusing Scorpions and Cassies might try to turn us away.

Brutalities are also a game-changer, offering the closure of a Fatality in a fraction of the time for those skilled enough to meet the required criteria – expect these to be popular among high-level players. It's great to see *MK* deliver a game that holds up on its own merits without having to rely on gore to keep players interested. Greedy DLC model aside, *MKX* is an easy recommendation for anyone who enjoys kicking the shit out of friends and randoms alike and we can see this being our fighting game of choice for some time to come.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

In a series first, this is actually an accomplished fighter as well as being a gruesome theatre of punishment. Pick your fighter, learn some sick kombos and we'll see you online.

9

PlayMag_UK scored **9** for Mortal Kombat X

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China

Ubisoft takes a stab at a new perspective

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Ubisoft
DEVELOPER
In-house
PSN PRICE
£7.99
PLAYERS
1
INSTALL SIZE
3.15GB
AGE RATING
16
TWITTER
@assassinscreed

Trophies 18

0 0 3 15

PS4

TYPICALLY, GAMES PROGRESS from 2D to 3D and never look back. But it seems that Ubisoft has hidden-bladed this convention in the face and taken a leap of faith of its own as it rolls out this three-part 2.5D series: *Assassin's Creed Chronicles*. It sounds like a downgrade, doesn't it? Just hold on a minute before you firebomb forums with your Ubi-rage, though, because this is actually *good*... well, sort of.

The first iteration of this series, *Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China*, is set in during the Ming Dynasty and tells the story of Shao Jun, a female Chinese assassin. Shao Jun must employ a range of stealthy techniques to sneak across China and seek vengeance for the destruction of the Chinese Brotherhood by the hands of the Templars – this time in the form of a Eunuch group called the Tigers.

It's a beautiful debut with watercolour visuals preceding levels of diverse environments, from endless blue seas in the Macau harbour to awe-inspiring mountainous backdrops that hide behind the Forbidden Palace – all of which fuses effortlessly with a soundtrack of traditional Chinese instruments. But aside from the glimpses of atmosphere, the game can sometimes – just like you may do as Shao Jun – fall flat on its face.

It's not even as if it is dictated by a 'style over substance' dichotomy as there are really only two or three levels that present a visible 'wow' factor. The narrative is almost non-existent, too – you know that Shao Jun is out for revenge but a ten-second cut scene and barely three sentences worth of voice acting to illustrate her resolve just doesn't cut it. *China*, however, *is* a diluted version of the mainline *Assassin's Creed* games so it can be forgiven for lacking the sheer substance of its 3D parent series.

> "THERE IS NO ROOM FOR FAFFING AROUND FOR THE RIGHT ATTACK COMBOS"

There are links to the main series that will keep fans happy, like an appearance from the legendary Ezio Auditore and more leaps of faith into haystacks than you can shake an eagle at. Instead of making use of the freedom to traverse cities like the other protagonists, you perfect the art of free running across a given area and all the while utilising Eagle Vision almost all the time to help you navigate it.

And just like in the parent series, if you prioritise killing guards over sneaking past them via a well-timed roll towards a pillar then you will be punished. There are three routes that the points system in *China* takes for every traversal: Shadow (for complete stealth masters), Brawler (for those who want to fight through China) and Assassin (a mix of the first two) along with gold, silver and bronze ratings for each. The game does seem to decide the best course of action for you to take (stealth, of course) which makes the difficulty stagnant and bland even as you progress through the levels. As such, there is no room for faffing around for the right attack combos– it takes just a few unparried sword slashes to die. Having said that, there are some parts that are outrageously fun when in non-urgent situations, like sliding, slicing and dicing soldiers as you encounter them and performing stylish jump slashes onto unsuspecting soldiers.

But you wouldn't be wrong in thinking that it looks like *China* has been heavily



OR YOU COULD TRY

METAL GEAR SOLID HD COLLECTION If you want to try a game with multiple approaches to stealth, check out these awesome remasters... *MGS3*, to be specific.

www.imagineshop.co.uk

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△○×□ Shao Jun likes to ignore burning buildings (and people) and escape as quickly as possible instead.



△○×□ Don't bother stealthing if there's a guard below – why not try a death-from-above-style sword stab through their head?

inspired by *Mark Of The Ninja*. A lot of the elements seem to be similar between the two games: the awareness cones of the soldiers, the items on hand that help you distract your enemies, even Shao Jun's outfit – the list goes on and on. What sets *China* apart from *Mark Of The Ninja*, though, is the free-running, which comes naturally to you as you traverse your way across the 2.5D stages. It's the multiple layers of the levels that really shine in *China* and the way that you can criss-cross from the towered foreground to the buildings in the background. Then there are the speed run levels where you have to outrun a spreading fire. They're enjoyable the first time round but grow stale, as they do not vary throughout the game and barely increase in difficulty despite appearing frequently.

It's a shame because *China* is enjoyable in places but it lacks complexity, heart and soul. If it's not obvious until after the climax, that the final moments of the game take place on the Great Wall Of China – one of the eight wonders of the modern world and an integral part of Chinese history – then clearly there is something amiss here.

Carrie Mok

VERDICT

Shoeblading an enemy soldier in the face is fun, but *Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China*'s overall simplicity and blandness means you won't be returning soon.

7 PlayMag_UK scored **7** for Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

THE LORE OF SHAO JUN

She's a popular character in the AC lore, but who exactly IS Shao Jun?



Our leading lady appears in more than just the debut *Chronicles* game. She takes a supporting role in the short film *Assassin's Creed: Embers*, which came with Collector's Editions of *Assassin's Creed: Revelations*. The film explains that after Shao Jun fled from the Tigers, she arrived in Italy in 1524 in a villa belonging to a retired Ezio Auditore. Shao received tutelage from him and with two years of core assassin knowledge under her belt and a mysterious boxed gift from Ezio, Shao Jun returns to China in 1526 to seek vengeance on the Tigers.



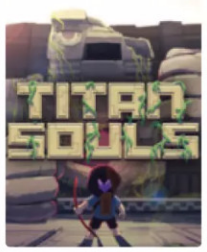
△○×□ Eagle Vision lets you see the walking paths of guards and wonder why they are cracking their necks so much.



Titan Souls

One shot, one kill





DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Devolver Digital

DEVELOPER
Acid Nerve

PSN PRICE
£11.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
7+

TWITTER
@AcidNerve

Trophies 28

1 7 8 12

PS4

ALSO ON VITA

THE PREMISE HERE is, like most good indie games, refreshingly simple. You are a solitary hero on a bit of a jaunt through a mysterious land populated by the eponymous Titans: large and imposing creatures of different varieties. There are over 20 Titans to slay, but nothing else – you essentially move from boss fight to boss fight, occasionally solving small puzzles on the way, but largely just walking between encounters.

Sounds a bit simple, sure, but the combat is where things become a lot more interesting – your only weapon is a solitary arrow. We have not seen something like this before and we really enjoyed using it – the arrow is mapped to Square, and by holding and releasing the button you fire the arrow, directing it with the analogue stick. To retrieve the arrow, you *can* choose to make a dash for it and pick it up (although this is rarely an option), or you can do the more sensible thing and hold down Square again, which sends your pointy little friend flying right back towards you.

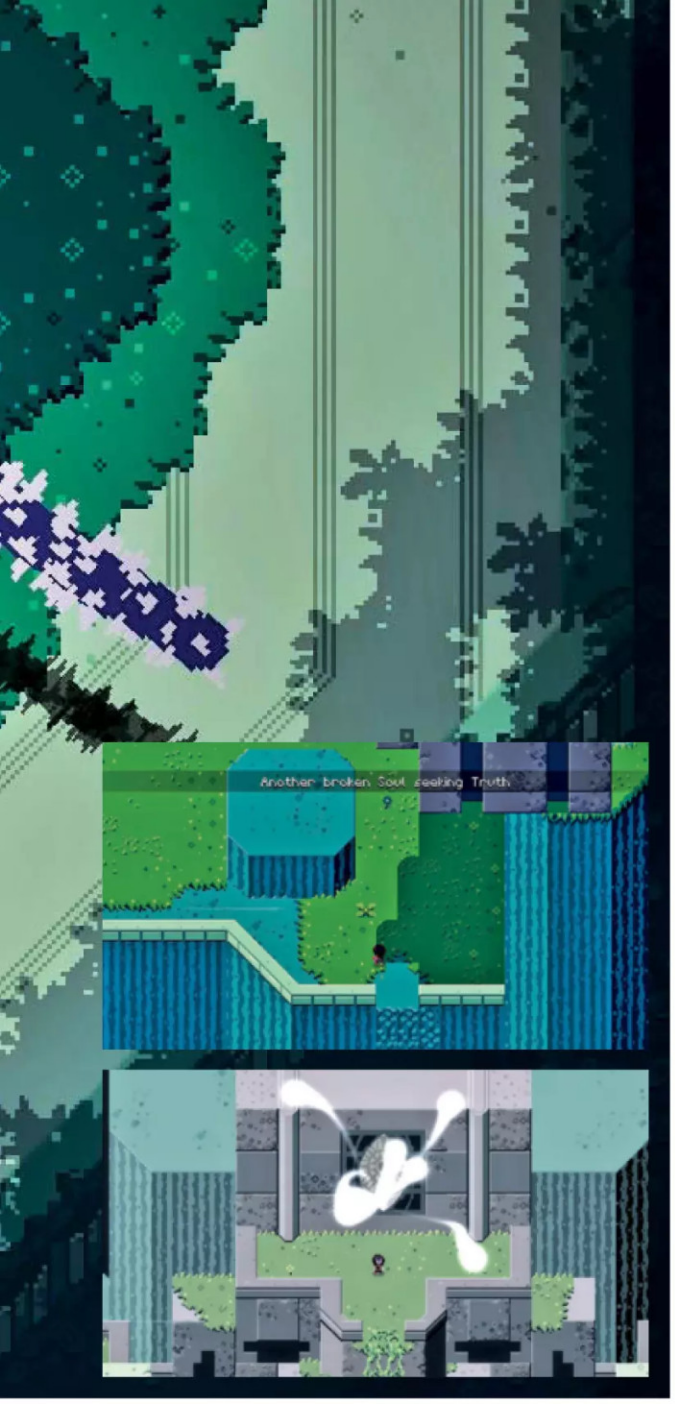
The Titans of *Titan Souls* are a glorious mix of weird and wonderful foes, ranging from what resembles a human heart inside a big blob of lime jelly to some extremely large and extremely angry plant life. The variety is outstanding, really. Each and every boss battle entails a different method of hunting – each one is essentially a puzzle, requiring you to, at first, visually identify the beast's weak point, and then work out how you're going to send your lone arrow flying gracefully (and sometimes randomly) into it. The first few encounters with each boss are particularly special, forcing you to learn patterns and wait for openings to attack. Learning is one of the key expectations that Acid Nerve's game holds above you, really – if you aren't patient and aware, you're unlikely to get anywhere.

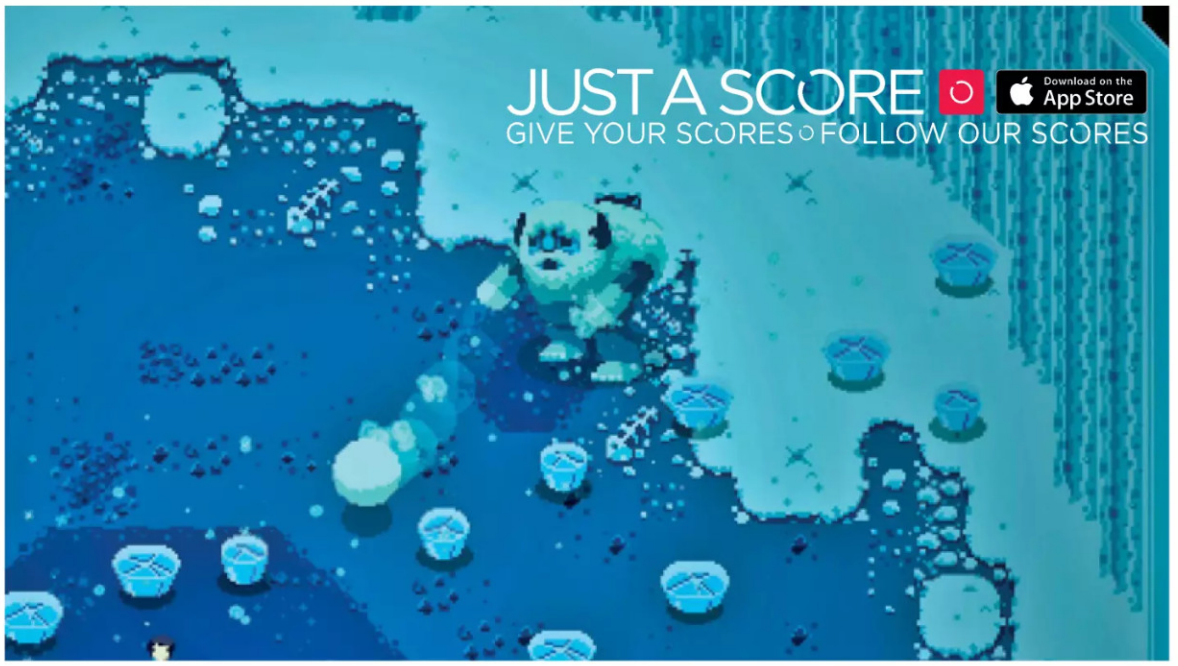


△○×□ **The pixel style is gorgeous, and the look and feel of each of the game's areas really stand out from each other. If only there were a little more to do when exploring...**

FOR FANS OF... △ **HOTLINE MIAMI** The obvious comparison is *Shadow Of The Colossus*, but *Titan Souls*' proclivity for throwing you into fast-paced peril is more like Dennaton's incredible game.

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There are a few really standout fights – there's one with a yeti later on that seems insurmountable the first time you encounter him – but a couple were rather frustrating after several attempts. Now, you can easily put that down to our incompetence (most people do), but really it comes down to one or two irritating scraps that felt a little unfair at times. Still, overall the concept holds up, and *Titan Souls* is generally a good advert for games that do away with minor encounters and just rely on drama.

Titan Souls has missed a trick, though. When we think back to a few of our favourite indie games of the last couple of years, the thing that makes them feel so addictive and compulsive is the ability to just hit one button after you've failed and be back in the game immediately. This is an essential feature for a tough game in which death comes thick and fast. *Titan Souls* dishes out death more than most games and forces you to learn and adapt, but stumbles when it comes to immediacy, as every death is followed by loading times and respawn points.

"COMBAT IS WHERE THINGS GET COOL, THOUGH – YOUR ONLY WEAPON IS AN ARROW"

It's frustrating to have to walk between a respawn point and a boss fight when there appears to be no point in doing so.

It would be far less frustrating if, after succumbing to an enemy, you were to respawn directly outside of the boss door. It would shave off so much unnecessary meandering, frankly, and would leave the game feeling a lot tighter. There are benefits to exploring *Titan Souls*' world – the art style is colourful and crisp, and the soundtrack is incredible – but after a large plant has smashed you in the face with a tendril for the 30th time, you aren't in the mood to go skipping through the woods *again* to stage another attempt.

△○×□ **Boss designs are inventive and interesting, each requiring a wholly bespoke strategic approach.**

There's clearly a decent world here, full of mystery and melancholy, and there's no denying the debt *Titan Souls* owes to *Shadow Of The Colossus* and *Dark Souls* in terms of its tone. Its problems lie in design, though – the largely empty world seems almost superfluous and you'll come away from each encounter triumphant, but lacking any sort of reward. As a skill/puzzle game it works, as an action game it's pretty much there, but as a whole package, it's just a bit hollow.

Steve Holmes



TROPHY CABINET

BEATING THE YETI
Aggro him, walk sideways to dodge the ice blasts and then you need to wait for him to roll. If you are in the right spot, you will be able to hit his rear end when he lands.



DRUG TRIAL
When fighting the mushroom, avoid the orbs and run through their trails for a psychedelic Bronze.

VERDICT

It is a valiant effort, and one that has resulted in a competent and occasionally thrilling game. Unfortunately, due to the odd shortfall, it doesn't reach its potential.

7

PlayMag_UK scored **7** for
Titan Souls

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"DIALOGUE IS OFTEN GENUINELY AMUSING – A SHAMEFUL RARITY IN VIDEOGAMES"





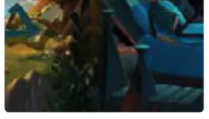




△○×□ Was it worth forking out to have Elijah Wood play Shay, a character that's not as likable as his co-star Vella?

Broken Age

A tale of two halves



VITA

ALSO ON PS4

DETAILS

PUBLISHER Double Fine

DEVELOPER In-house

PSN PRICE £19.99

PLAYERS 1

INSTALL SIZE 2.1 GB

AGE RATING 12

TWITTER @DoubleFine

Trophies 45

1 | 2 | 16 | 26

BROKEN AGE IS something of a false prophet. After its huge Kickstarter success, it was heralded as a title at the vanguard of the renaissance of the adventure game. Don't get us wrong, there *has* been something of a revival of the genre, but *Broken Age* has by no means led it, and nor would we want it to be positioned as an example to follow, because it is a little disappointing. Not bad, just disappointing, given the connection Double Fine's legendary Tim Schafer has with classics such as *Grim Fandango*, *Full Throttle* and the *Monkey Island* series.

There are a number of ways in which *Broken Age* shines, however. Some areas are less interesting than others, but on the whole, the game is beautiful to look at, its distinctive characters and colourful backdrops are rendered in a delightful pastel style. There's life in that art, too. The dialogue is often genuinely amusing – a shameful rarity in videogames – and the voice acting is of a high quality. It's regrettable that one of its two protagonists, Vella, far outshines her co-star, Shay, but that doesn't change the fact that the game is populated by a cast of likeable characters in a world that is a pleasure to explore.

At least, it is for a while. As the game moves into its second half, you realise that you're confined to retreading the same small areas over and over again. Moving through the game's world starts to feel more and more like a chore. That is exacerbated by the long load times you are confronted with every time you move into a new area on Vita, something which *really* becomes a drag when you're moving back and forth trying to find the solution to a puzzle.

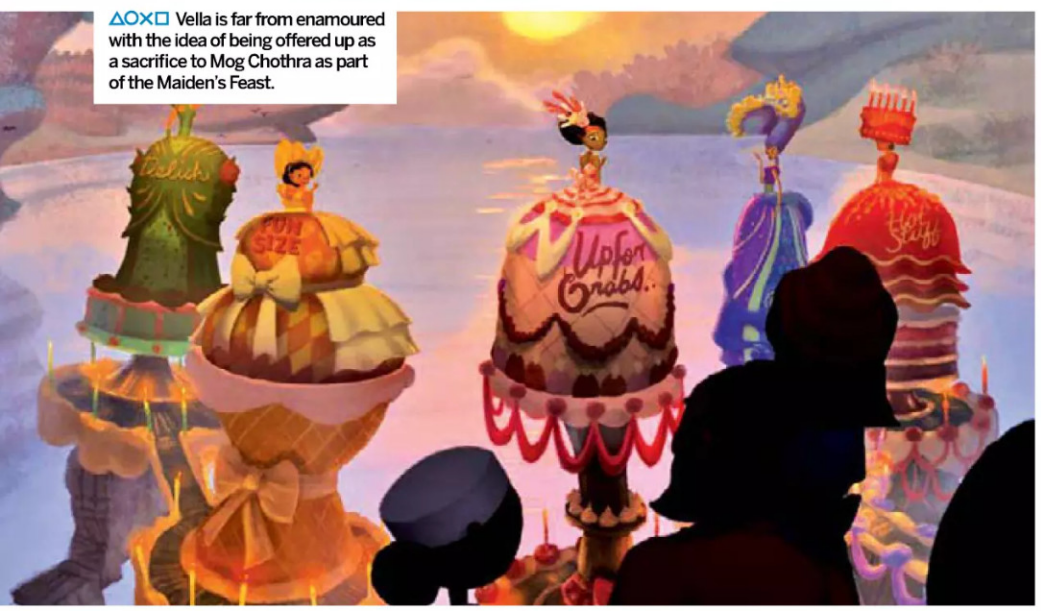
No doubt you will do just that, too, because the game loses its hold on puzzle design as it progresses. It might suddenly present you with a nonsensical puzzle with illogical signposting. Or, it might confront you with a puzzle that's infuriatingly finicky (we are getting flashbacks to the game's anger-inducing conclusion as we type this). It will even feel like it's suddenly changed the rules – requiring you to gain knowledge by switching characters two-thirds through the game for a couple of puzzles, without

OR YOU COULD TRY △ **BROKEN SWORD 5: THE SERPENT'S CURSE** If you want a trip back to the older adventure games, this entry in the *Broken Sword* series is a great shout.

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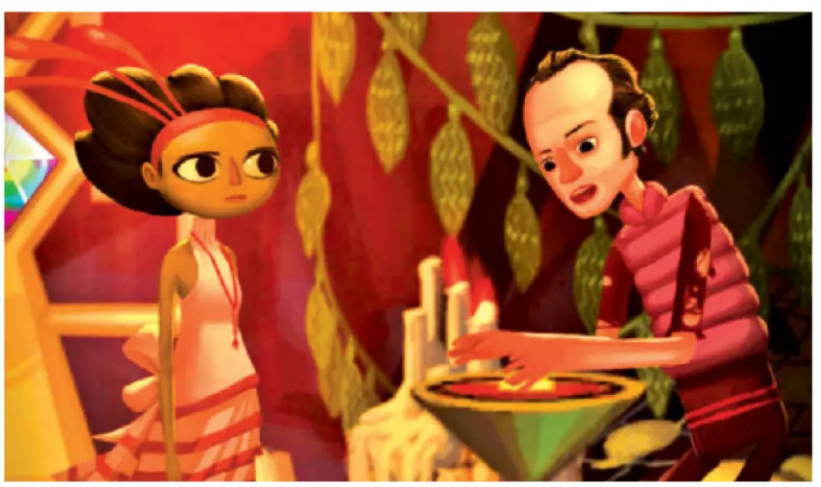




△○×□ Vella is far from enamoured with the idea of being offered up as a sacrifice to Mog Chothra as part of the Maiden's Feast.



△○×□ One thing the game's always got going for it is that it looks great.



any hint that you need to do so and after being conditioned to think you can solve each of the character's sections separately up until that point.

The fissure presented between protagonists Vella and Shay – you can switch between them at any time, but circumstances always keep them apart – becomes emblematic of a game that's split into two halves. The first captures you with its promise, the second sees it crumble as you realise that promise is not going to be delivered on. Indeed, a large part of the problem with the game is that it never draws anything interesting out from its core concept – that of enabling you to switch between two different characters at any time. After they come into contact for the briefest of moments halfway through *Broken Age*, you expect the game to start drawing something interesting out of its dual nature. But, no, it instantly splits them up again and asks you to continue as you were.

The same can be said of the game's story. The revelation that the game builds to at its halfway point is intriguing and leaves you eager to see where things will go after that point. Unfortunately, the plot doesn't really go anywhere. It kind of feels like as if the game has run out of ideas and it ends up stuttering to a finish as it tries to dress up a pedestrian tale as a thrilling conspiracy.

Beneath the lavish art style and the high quality production (though, even there, we encountered a few audio bugs here and there), *Broken Age* ends up feeling rather empty and desolate. It's a game based on a concept that never bears any fruit, either mechanically or narratively, and one that, consequently, feels like a good idea that's not been properly thought through.

Paul Walker-Emig

VERDICT

The characters might make it worthwhile for adventure game obsessives, but there's nothing beyond that which makes *Broken Age* a game we want to champion.

5 PlayMag_UK scored **5** for Broken Age

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

SUCKER PUNCH



The whole concept of switching between multiple characters has already been done by Tim Schafer in one of his previous games: *Day Of The Tentacle*. The difference with that game was that it did something with the concept from a mechanical perspective, letting you to pass items between time periods, occasionally changing their properties. It made the whole premise seem worthwhile in a way it's not in *Broken Age*. It'll be fascinating to see how that game holds up as a whole when it makes its way to PS4 later this year.



PUBLISHER NAMCO | **DEVELOPER** NAMCO | **FORMAT** PSONE
RELEASE DATE 7 NOVEMBER 1995 | **PLAY SCORE** N/A | **METACRITIC SCORE** N/A

The Making Of... TEKKEN

Tekken's legacy has been unparalleled; the series has spawned movies, action figures, twenty sequels and has become a staple of fighting game history. Dom Peppiatt dons his karate gi and steps into the ring to uncover the origins of Tekken...



Its PlayStation dominance can be traced back to its roots as an arcade hit – an arcade hit, that was designed to undercut *Virtua Fighter*'s dominance. *Tekken* – which would go on to be the first PlayStation game to sell over a million units – is responsible for making fighting games the console staple they are today. It's strange to reflect on and realise that, originally, *Tekken* wasn't even supposed to be a *game*.

"*Tekken* was a project to develop technology for use in 3D character animation, rather than as a 3D fighting game," Katsuhiro Harada, *Tekken*'s game director tells us – he's the series' auteur, who's worked on the franchise for over 20 years. "We reworked the game around the time of *Tekken 3* to make it more of a 3D fighting game, but the first two [came from tech demos]."

The curious decision to release *Tekken* as a game (rather than deconstruct it to use for its texture mapping – which *Ridge Racer* later did anyway) was all down to long time series rival *Virtua Fighter*; Sega's groundbreaking 3D fighter that, once upon a time, challenged even the mighty *Street Fighter* for the coins of arcade goers. Namco intended to sell the *Tekken* cabinets to arcades for less than Sega were offering *Virtua Fighter* setups for, too – *Tekken* was originally the *Mortal Kombat* of 3D arcade fighting games.

"If asked whether there is a rivalry with other fighting games, maybe most won't understand this, but in the arcade game sector we are rivals but also comrades," laughs Harada, explaining that original faux-rivalry. "For companies that operate arcades, not only do you need your own games to be successful, but also those of rival companies as well. That's why [we] are more like brothers-in-arms rather than rivals. It shows lack of understanding when people try to say there is rivalry or







△○×□ Remember when we all used to think graphics like these actually looked good? Man, we were dumb...

bad blood there. Often, events for both games are held at the same time. Even if someone feels hostile towards a rival, that just shows their own shortcomings. That said, it is entertaining as a performance!"

Tekken's need to perform well in the arcades and keep players coming back for more lead to its success on the PlayStation. Namco (who had actually poached a fair number of Sega's *Virtua Fighter* team prior to the *Tekken* project's development) showed it understood the core formula fighting games needed in order to attract players: it had simple, easily understandable input strings that were easy to pick up, but fiendish to master. It was intuitive – one face button per limb was an inspired design choice, so even amateur players could associate button presses with on-screen reactions. Even the slightest bit of skill was rewarded in *Tekken*, making the game extremely playable and slyly addictive.

"The arcade is a very severe market," Harada explains when we asked him whether *Tekken*'s command structure was *intentionally* designed to be so addictive. "Consumers only pay you [$1] at a time to play. You, [as a developer] don't get [$50] right away; you have to have them keep coming back. That means your game has to be extremely fun to survive. Fighting games raised in this environment are more entertaining and more balanced as a result of this."

"NOT ONLY DO YOU NEED YOUR OWN GAMES TO BE SUCCESSFUL BUT ALSO THOSE OF RIVAL COMPANIES"

Tekken's runaway success in the arcades meant it would inevitably end up on consoles – but landing on the PlayStation (as an exclusive, no less) was purely down to Sony's early investment in Namco's new-fangled 3D division. "There wasn't an option other than the PlayStation to consider," Harada explains. "Most people knew [*Tekken*'s] platform as PlayStation, but we

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know in five facts



1 It's a 3D fighter that was made to challenge *Virtua Fighter*'s unchecked rule of the arcades.



2 It's loved for its intuitive combat and simple-to-learn (but hard to master) commands.



3 'Tekken' means 'Iron Fist' in Japanese. Which is the name of the in-game tournament.



4 *Tekken* was the first PlayStation game to sell over one million copies.



5 There is even a *Tekken* museum (which is free to enter) located in Osaka, Japan.



△○×□ King's ten-hit combo is forever etched onto our brains. If only we were that good with useful details.



STANDOUT MOMENT



THE DEVIL WITHIN

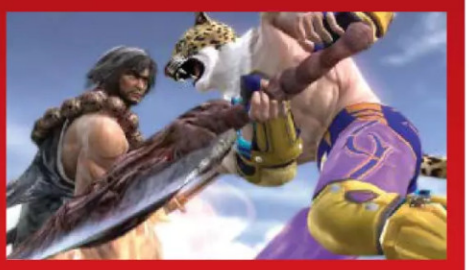
The first time you realise Tekken isn't 'realistic'

You've been pounding away at your opponents with relative ease, only really taken aback by Paul Phoenix's stupid hair. You're Kazuya – son of *Tekken* antagonist Heihachi Mishima, and when you were five, your dad threw you off a cliff. Now, you're on top of that cliff, ready to get revenge on your dad. Thing is, you're powered by a 'devil gene' and all of a sudden, you turn purple, and realise you've got a crazy projectile at your disposal. 'Hang on,' you think, 'everything so far has been... kinda real...' You fly up with your wings and slam your dad into the floor, laughing maniacally. This weirdness is just the beginning...

FURTHER READING



OLDER – STREET FIGHTER II
We wouldn't have fighting games as they exist today if it wasn't for *Street Fighter II* – the 2D brawler set a benchmark that all fighting games are measured against.



NEWER – SOULCALIBUR V
Most of the same team from *Tekken* project went on to work on *SoulCalibur* – a fighting game with a difference: it had weapons. Now in its fifth iteration, it still outclasses most other fighters.

developed the PlayStation hardware-compatible arcade board, System 11, along with SCE before the release of the original PlayStation!"

This native understanding of the hardware, along with some handy marketing and backing from Sony itself, propelled *Tekken* to success, giving many gamers another reason to pick up that little grey plastic box so many of us spent so many hours with. Yet, Harada wasn't blown away by *Tekken*'s success, and that wasn't even because of how competent a fighter it was – Harada knew the average consumer (particularly in the West) would be more impressed with what drove *Tekken* to be born in the first place: the technology.

"Rather than being well-received as a fighting game, I was well aware that games of that era were more highly regarded for the 3D polygon and other graphic technology." That lead Harada and his team to iterate on the tech more than the core mechanics as the series grew; the second game saw very little change in terms of mechanics. "No one was really thinking about [a sequel] whilst *Tekken* was in development," Harada reveals. "[*Tekken 2*] was basically decided by focusing on what new technology we wanted to implement. Regarding the game as a product in the fighting genre, we based our decisions only on feedback from questionnaires in the arcade."

So it wasn't until *Tekken 3* – the biggest of the *Tekken* series on the original PlayStation – that Namco *really* doubled down on the core mechanics of the franchise. But, as Harada explains, rising popularity didn't necessarily mean all of his team wanted to stay with *Tekken* for the long run. "There was a memory that stood out," Harada says of *Tekken 3*'s development. "At the time, a person who was like a leader of development quit and joined another company, taking many of the designers and programmers that had joined the company at the same time as me. I was very surprised! We were actually put in the position that we were unable to develop the next *Tekken* or *Soul Blade*. It took much effort to rebuild the development team. We had to redo everything, starting from scratch."

If it wasn't for this calamitous departure (which we can only assume was *Virtua Fighter* alumni and original *Tekken* director, Seiichi Ishii, but Harada did not confirm), we may never have gotten the complete package that was the brilliant *Tekken 3* – that was when Harada stepped up to lead the project, and that's when *Tekken*

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△○×□ The original game really hasn't aged well at all, but the sequels still hold up okay...

"I WAS WELL AWARE THAT GAMES OF THAT ERA WERE MORE HIGHLY REGARDED FOR 3D"

started *really* giving back some love to its devoted console fans.

"The revenue gained from the arcade is then invested into the development of the console version," Harada explains. "That is why compared to other fighting games, *Tekken* is able to have more bonus modes, customisation features, bonus BGM, and additional characters at no added cost to the consumer. So many console consumers often never realize the benefit they are receiving from *Tekken* being in the arcade."

This allowed *Tekken 3* to ship with the (in)famous bonus features that made it so successful – the *Streets Of Rage* inspired Tekken Force mode, the unintentionally competitive Tekken Ball mode, the bizzaro character Tiger and the licensed cameo, Gon. But why did Harada decide to lace the console version with so much extra content, when the arcade standard edition would have done just as well on consoles?

"It was the omotenashi (hospitality) mentality of Japanese. At the time, Namco was raking in money, and arcades were doing extremely well. Since the consumers were giving us so much support, it was only natural to do our utmost to please them in return. The Tekken Ball mode was the result of me originally trying to make a mini-game to practice aerial combos!"

That respect for the consumer – that insistence on giving players back what Harada believes they deserve – is what's kept *Tekken* coming back, again and again, despite some failures and missteps along the way – remember *Tekken* 4? We try not to...

"That's probably why *Tekken* has survived for 20 years now," laughs Harada when we suggest this. "One of my favourite franchises, the *Street Fighter* series, didn't see a new installment for ten years in between *Street Fighter III* to *Street Fighter IV*. But because we're an arcade operator, we were able to generate revenue to keep updating the *Tekken* franchise with new installments. That's essentially why *Tekken* has generated the most income in the arcades in the past 20 years out of *any* fighting games, and sold over 43 million console copies worldwide, making it the most successful fighting game franchise. I think that proves the strategy chosen was the correct one!"

20 years later and *Tekken* is still a staple name on console – even after the misdirection that was *Tekken 4*, some God-awful spin-offs (we're looking at you, *Death By Degrees*) and a free-to-play experiment, excitement for the brand refuses to wane. With *Tekken 7* location testing in American arcades this month, and already sweeping Japan, it's safe to say Harada's 3D fighting empire is a long way from extinction.

But what does the man himself want? What is his ultimate goal for the *Tekken* franchise? It's quite simple, really: "My hopes for the future? To create a game which everyone says 'Now that is exactly what I have been waiting for!' That is my overall goal."



ATTACK OF THE CLONES

The original arcade version of *Tekken* had eight characters available by default, but each original character had a bespoke 'sub-boss' they'd fight during the eighth fight. Whilst these characters weren't playable in the arcade version, the home version made them unlockable. They were usually just clones of their corresponding character, albeit with a few extra attacks. This is how to unlock each bonus character...

ANNA WILLIAMS	Finish story with Nina
ARMOR KING	Finish story with King
DEVIL KAZUYA	Complete Galaga mini-game on opening screen
KUNIMITSU	Finish story with Michelle
HEIHACHI	Finish story with *all* original characters
KUMA	Finish story with Paul
GANRYU	Finish story with Yoshimitsu
LEE CHAOLAN	Finish story with Kazuya
P-JACK	Finish story with Jack
WANG	Finish story with Law

PLAY PLUS

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INTERVIEW

COMMUNITY COMES FIRST

Christian Phillips, director of product development at Sony Santa Monica, talks about changing free-to-play with Guns Up!, Drawn To Death and Kill Strain

We have been talking to developers about the possibility of a PC-style early access on consoles, and it kind of sounds like that's what you are trying to do. Is this correct?
It plays a significant role in what we're trying to do in terms of bringing free-to-play games to PS4. Those games live and die by their community and the best way to build community is via early access and via multiple closed beta tests and thus creating a conversation with your fans to help you refine, and in a lot of senses define, your decisions so that we achieve the goal that we are setting out to achieve, which is to make a great game.

Do you see this movement to being more open – in terms of feedback from the community – is something that's going to continue with consoles?
I hope so. From a first-party perspective, we're bringing games to the platform that are following this business model, there are other publishers that have already released some of these products and I think the successful ones are the ones that are super open and transparent. It's a little scary. You're putting your baby out there way earlier than you would in a traditional publishing model and you just have to be confident that you're making a great game and that the feedback you're going to get – some of it may be harsh and hard to hear – is only going to make the game better.

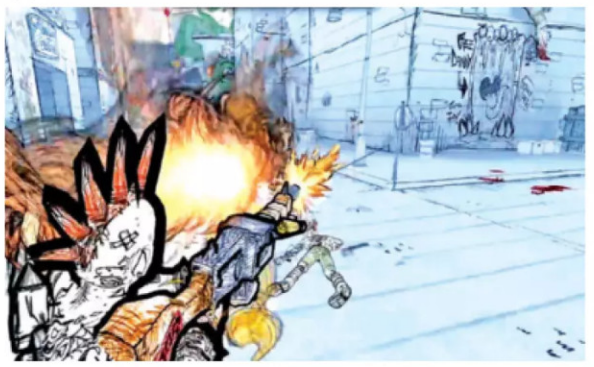
> "YOU'RE PUTTING YOUR BABY OUT THERE WAY EARLIER THAN YOU WOULD IN A TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING MODEL"

Do you think that will help with the stigma attached to the genre? Some see free-to-play just as a means to get money out of them...
Exactly. I absolutely believe that by offering up as many opportunities for hands-on experiences and being able to be an active participant, folks who normally turn their nose up the minute they hear free-to-play, that'll get eliminated, because the reason they have those reactions is because of the games. *Guns Up!* has a base-building component and some people hear that and go, 'oh, I'm gonna select build a bunker and I have to come back in eight hours.' It's not going to be like that; it's going to be completely instantaneous. As long as you have the account level progression to allow you to place a bunker in your base, you're going to select it and you're going to place it.

All of our games are built with the idea that we may have a large portion of our community that plays these games relentlessly and brag about how they haven't given us a single penny and we're okay with that. We want that to an extent, because they're going to talk about it. They are going to talk about what a great time they are having playing the game and they can't believe they haven't had to pay at all.

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△○×□ Phillips says there'll be no 'pay-to-win' in Santa Monica's titles.

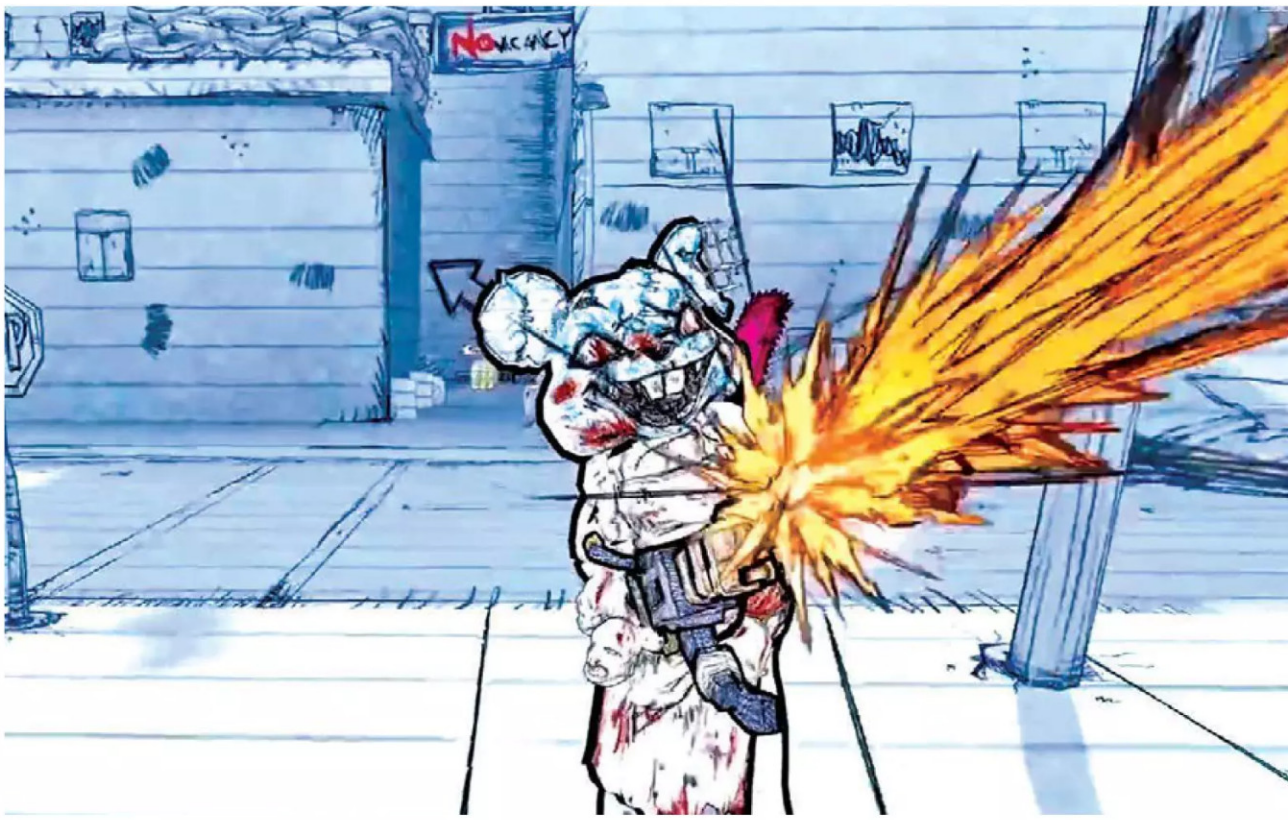
That's going to bring more and more people in. Then that in turn is going to bring their friends in on it. They will effectively become ambassadors for the game.

Indie games seem to be getting more ambitious than they were a few years ago. Do you think the perception of indie and digital games is changing because of that ambition?

I hope so. I hope that when people think of the games we're building out of San Diego – *Guns Up!*, *Kill Strain*, *Drawn To Death* – that the first thing out their mouth isn't, 'oh it's this indie game...'

We also know that you get hostility from some people towards indie games as well...

Yeah. I've been in the industry for 25 years now and even I'm jaded enough to go, 'Sony's publishing indie games, really?' But we do! I've worked at all the hardware manufacturers and the thing I love about game development when it comes to Sony is, it's a craft. And that craft is respected. I think that's why indie devs respond so well to working with Sony as a partner, because it doesn't mandate design decisions. We are there to help support the vision of what the game is. Really, the only time I would ever get into a discussion about the contents of the game would be to ask the question: is this really a PlayStation experience? I ask it not because I work for PlayStation, but because I'm thinking of the end user. The end user has invested in our console. They have certain expectations of quality and scope and experience and I want to make sure that we're serving them. With these games, we're going to know instantly with closed betas and open betas. They're going to be super vocal! We never have to wonder what people think of our games! They're gonna tell us, whether we want to hear it or not!





△○×□ *Drawn To Death* takes place in the pages of a teenager's notebook.

△○×□ *Guns Up!* is simple enough that you can pick up and play.

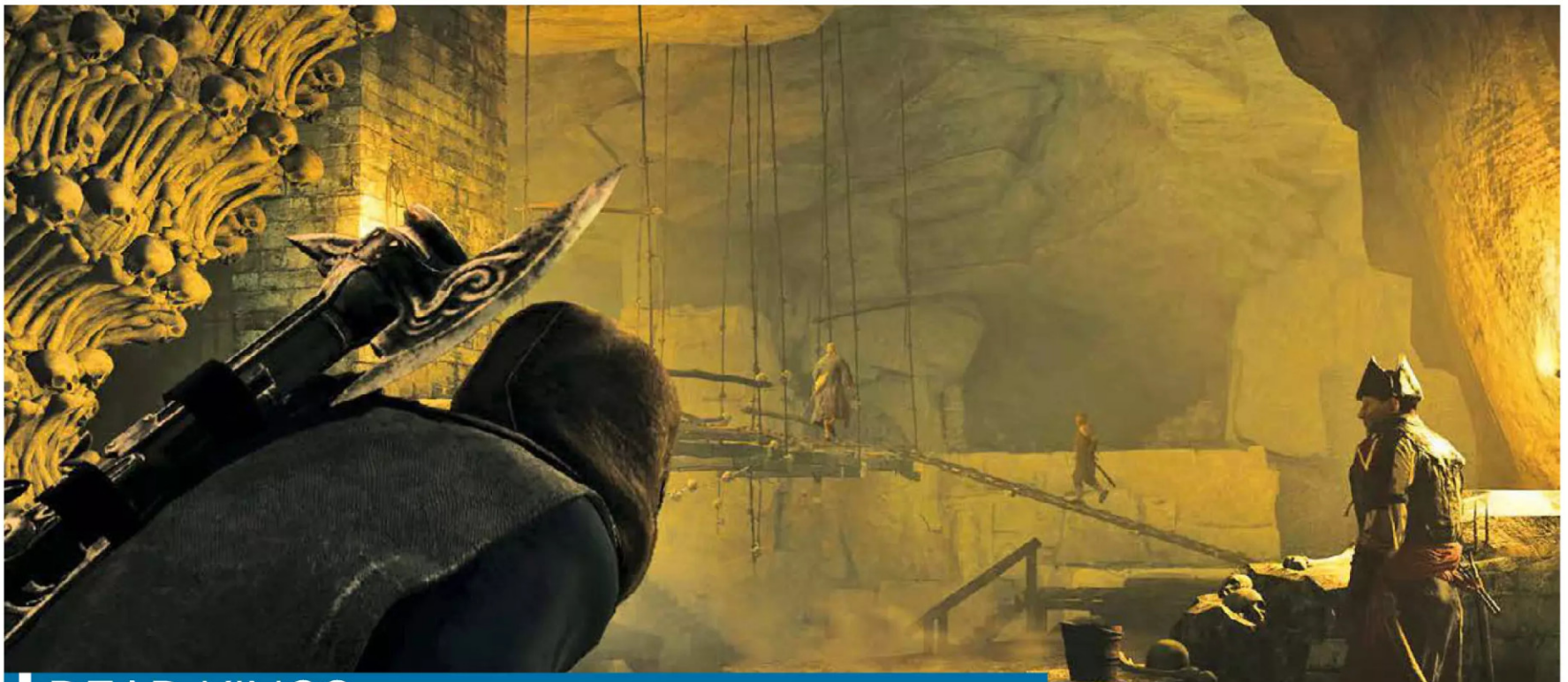




EXTENDED PLAY

ASSASSIN'S CREED

Ubisoft's flagship series returned with the Assassin's Creed Chronicles series and we've got more on the way when Victory hits at the end of the year. If you can't wait until then, there are plenty of other ways to get your Creed on



DEAD KINGS

FOR THOSE OF you who ploughed through *Assassin's Creed: Unity* early on, it might be time to go back now that *Dead Kings* has been released. The DLC was originally meant to be part of *Unity*'s season pass, but Ubisoft decided to release it for free to all players as an apology for some of the problems the game faced at launch (season pass buyers were compensated with a free game). A free story-based extension that was intended to be paid content? Yes please. *Dead Kings* takes place after *Unity*'s story, is set in the commune of Saint-Denis and follows Arno as he fights against a raiders sacking the tombs of French kings. The DLC opts for a darker tone and visual style than the main game, showing a man who has tried to move on from the chaos of revolutionary Paris. The best part, though? The fact that it's free.



CO-OP

■ **THE ASSASSIN'S CREED** series has always been a single-player game first and a multiplayer game second (if at all). For that reason, we wouldn't be surprised if many of you played *Unity* in the same way we did – that is, focusing on the single-player campaign at the expense of co-op. With the campaign out the way, co-op offers a different way of experiencing what *Unity* has to offer. Playing with randoms can be a bit hit and miss, given that you sometimes end up playing with individuals who have no interest in working as a team, so, if you can rustle up some buddies to play with you, that's the best way to go.



"NOW MIGHT BE THE TIME TO REWIND A LITTLE AND GIVE ROGUE A SHOT"

SHADOW OF MORDOR

■ **IF YOU'RE MAXED** out on *Assassin's Creed* and want a game that can offer something similar, then why not give a game that ripped it off a try? We are talking, of course, about *Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor*. The game's traversal and stealth mechanics are borrowed pretty much wholesale from *Assassin's Creed*, meaning you'll be right at home if you're an *Assassin's Creed* veteran. The game also benefits from the fact that it's pinched its combat mechanics from the *Batman: Arkham* series, meaning that going hand-to-hand with the orc hordes is more enjoyable than fighting enemies in *Assassin's Creed*.



MULTIPLAYER

■ **ASSASSIN'S CREED MULTIPLAYER** might not be the focus of the series from Ubisoft's perspective, but there is a dedicated fan base that consistently evangelises the game's stealth-based multiplayer modes. Those fans were left disappointed when *Unity* released without a competitive multiplayer mode, so, if you want to see what the series has to offer in that regard, you'll need to 'do an *Assassin's Creed*' and go back in time. While *Brotherhood*, *Revelations*, *Assassin's Creed III* and *Black Flag* all have competitive multiplayer modes, the last of those is probably your best bet, simply because there will be more people playing it.



ROGUE

■ **GIVEN THAT ROGUE** is a PS3-only title that released at roughly the same time as its current-gen sibling, it's no surprise that it didn't get the same level of attention from Ubisoft in the run up to its release as *Unity* did. That's a shame, because, for our money, *Rogue* is actually the better of the two. If you're one of those *AC* fans who, understandably, plumped for *Unity* due to the promise of seeing what a true current-gen *Assassin's Creed* could do, now might be the time to rewind a bit and give *Rogue* a shot on PS3.



MASTERCLASS

LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

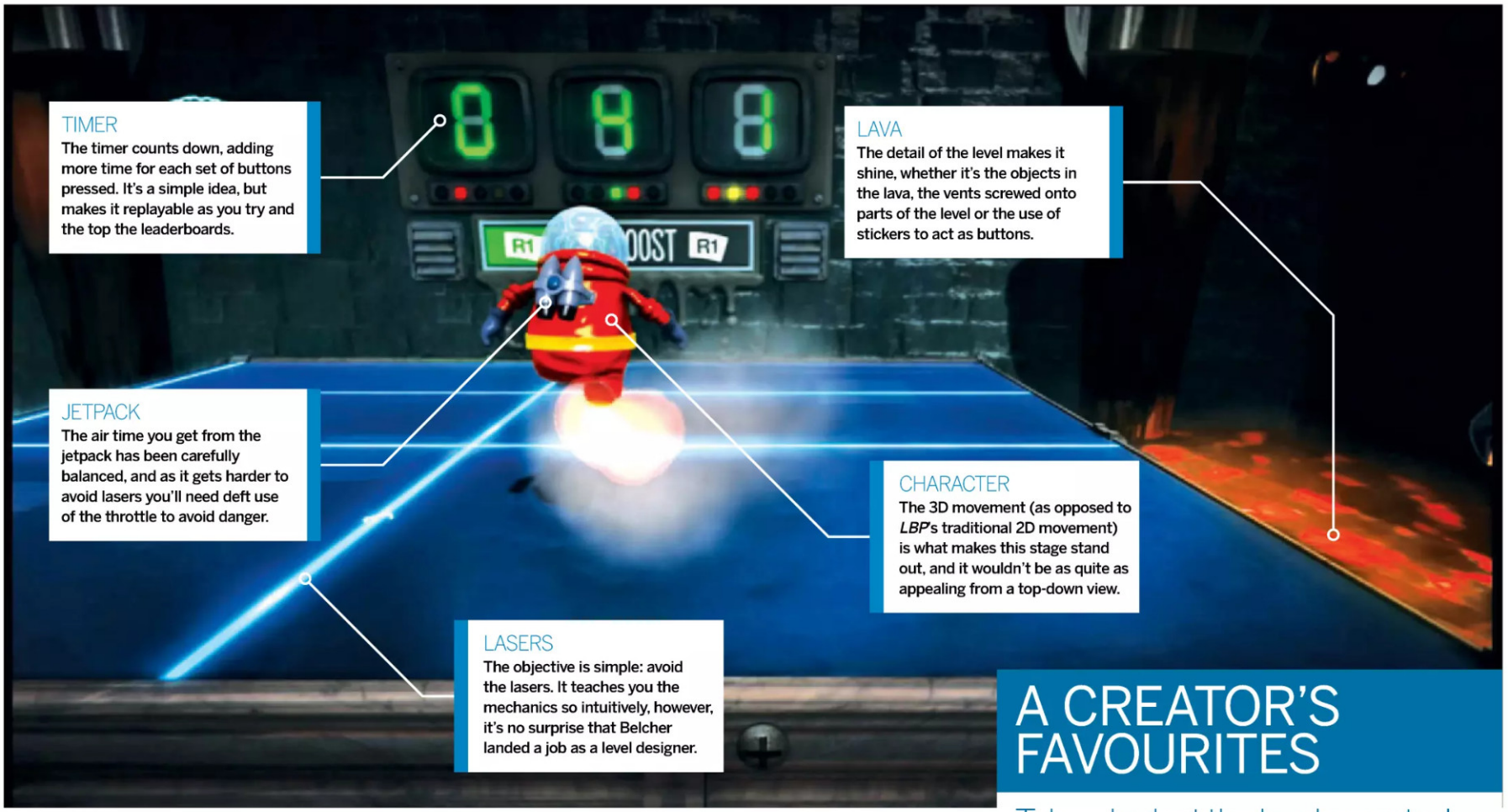
THERE ARE PLENTY of inspirational stories in the world of videogames. It's an industry that thrives on the passion of creative designers, talented programmers and skilled artists all looking to make their dreams a reality – a dream found in Steve Belcher's story. Here was a man working as a fitness instructor who injured himself, tearing several tendons in his body and preventing any kind of training while he recovered. That meant plenty of free time, and with it he turned to the original *LittleBigPlanet* to build his own projects. "All the time I would spend in the gym I spent creating levels in *LBP*," says Belcher, "using the same mentality of progression as I applied to my workouts." Known by his username of Steve_big_guns, he ended up becoming responsible for some of the popular levels created in the original *LBP*, from *Super Mario* themed stages to a *Portal* teleportation tech demo.

Even early on in Belcher's *LBP* career, he enjoyed using the initially basic tools of the game to create inventive twists on the typical gameplay. By the time the buildup for *LittleBigPlanet 2* was rolling around, Belcher got into the beta. Before long, Sony took note. "During the beta, I received an email from Sony about a job opportunity. I started working at Sumo a year before the release of *LBP2*," he remembers.

Especially interesting is how some of Belcher's creations have since carried over into *LBP3*. His level 'LittleBigMe', for example, features gameplay that shrinks Sackboy into a smaller version of himself, enabling him to pass through areas or control physics-based puzzles, an idea we now see in the new character, Toggle. Super_Bunnio, too, features a wall jump mechanic that Oddsock utilises – but during a time where it required a lot more behind-the-scenes logic work to make it function properly. "I worked on all the characters and prototyped most of gameplay mechanics in the game," Belcher tells us. "The characters' mechanics were intended as power ups, the DC pack is how I envisioned them. The wall jump material and cape are essentially Oddsock and Swoop, but with the ability to be combined with other power-ups and mechanics and were the same as the concepts made years previously. A lot of the mechanics were all prototyped early on using the *LBP2* tools."

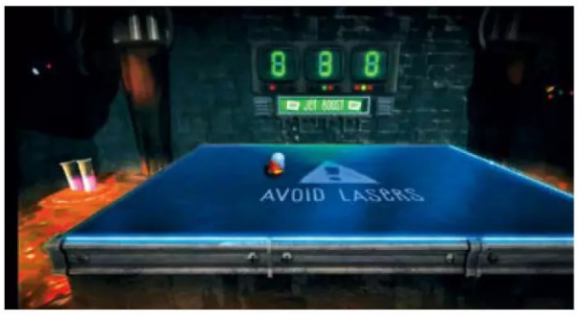
> "ALL THE TIME I WOULD SPEND IN THE GYM I SPENT CREATING LEVELS"

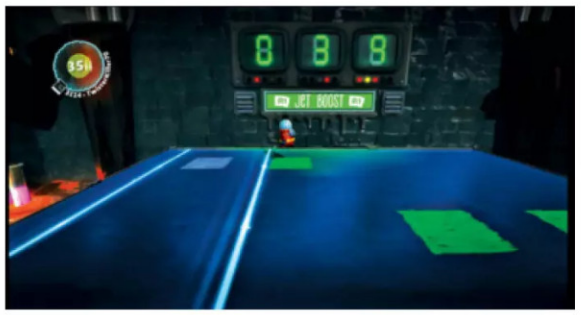
Though Belcher's originality and dedication has landed him a job as a level designer at Media Molecule, he still finds time for his love of *LittleBigPlanet*. His most recent creation is a truly 3D navigation system, letting you to cross between all 16 layers of *LBP3* seamlessly – rather than hopping back and forth like usual. This means you can have a greater flexibility over the camera angles, controls and design of the level, a fact that typical top down levels just can't match. "I came up with the technique in the original *LBP* using decorations placed incrementally along material and emitters. It translates Y or



A CREATOR'S FAVOURITES

Take a look at the levels created by other users that Belcher claims impressed him the most





X axis movement into Z axis movement. The positional setting on the Advanced In/Out Mover and the ability to control characters' rotations and animations made it possible to create a fully 3D character."

The level he created from this new system – titled 'Ludicrous Laboratory Lasers' – isn't overly complex like many of the other creations we've shown before, but it's impressive all the same. The arena is a short, flat panel that requires you to activate buttons that appear on the ground; lasers cross the area, however, meaning you need to either hop over them or use the short-burst jetpack to avoid being zapped. A simple idea, sure, but one brimming with replayability and made all the better by this use of three-dimensional movement. It's very detailed, too, with Belcher saying he prefers to "focus on lighting, shapes and movement. I like subtleties, such as the objects bobbing up and down in the lava and the natural movement of the robots. It's how the little things add up to create interest." Belcher's even created some copyable levels that you can access on his *LBP* planet, so you don't need to recreate this 3D movement mechanic yourself.

These days, Belcher spends most of his working day creating levels, but we'll no doubt see more from him in *LBP* in the future. Since *LBP* helped turn Belcher into a developer himself, he must have a unique insight into what the game needs to improve, so what does he hope will be added to *LBP* in the future? "I can't really talk about features," he says, "but I hope Cool Pages returns. It was a great way to find levels to play in the first two games and something that has been mentioned a lot by the community. I always wanted to see a full, dedicated 2D create-based game on consoles after seeing the *Rayman Legends* editor in action. Drawing 2D images and animating them would be simple and fun. At the moment *LBP3* is in a middle ground between 2D and 3D heading in an obvious direction. If there is another *LBP*, I would want it to be completely different to what has come previously." Whatever Sony decides to do with the *LBP* franchise in the future, we only hope that Belcher is involved.



HEADS UP!

Creator: mrhollywood12345 • Published in: *LittleBigPlanet 2*
Times played: 58356 • Times hearted: 18315

"It's a four-player deathmatch based on a crane where you try to kill the other players by making them fall off or by using a throwable bomb. The randomness of the multiplayer aspect makes every match unique and enjoyable," Belcher says.



ANGRY WHALE ENCOUNTER

Creator: CyriusTheVirus • Published in: *LittleBigPlanet 2*
Times played: 94426 • Times hearted: 42022

Belcher says, "this is a very random and fun survival level using the physics engine to create some amazing moments."

HOW TO...

MAKE A GREAT WRESTLING GAME

The millions and millions of wrestling fans out there deserve a great wrestling game and that's the bottom line. Why? Well, because we say so – that's why



YEAR AFTER YEAR, wrestling fans are disappointed by the latest average-at-best, trash-at-worst, *WWE* game. Every year, we always get our hopes up that maybe *this* time, they're going to nail it and deliver us the wrestling game that we have all got in our heads, the wrestling game that we have waited years for. They never deliver, though. Listen up, you Jabronis, it shouldn't be *that* hard to get a wrestling game right. Here, we'll do your job for you: *this* is what you need to do.

COPY NO MERCY

THERE'S A REASON that *No Mercy* is still hailed by many as the greatest wrestling game of all time. Its risk/reward grappling systems – moves were tiered based on how long you held the button – facilitated some great back and forth matches full of counters, matches that felt as if they built towards a climax as the match progressed. We're not saying that we want a copy of *No Mercy*'s combat system, but we do want a similar one – a system that can capture the drama of a match full of reversals and counter-strikes.





SET THE LADDER

THE WWE GAMES have done some decent stuff with nostalgic modes that let you recreate famous matches and moments, but let's be honest, what we really want is a career mode that lets us tell our *own* story about climbing the mountain and grabbing the title belt. That means we need backstage interactions to return to the fore. We need to be allowed to make choices that matter, that define our character and their path to the top. We want to form alliances, build stables, call out rivals, interfere in matches and create feuds that build to a proper payoff.







MAKE THEM POP

WRESTLING GAMES ARE always an atmosphere vacuum – that needs to be addressed. The crowd should be should be building to a frenzy as the match progresses and reacting to big moments. Too often, though, you'll find that a moonsault off a cage gets the same response as a body slam. The sound design should make matches feel important, and should replicate the excitement similar to what you'd see in a five-star main event. Until wrestling games get that right, it's going to be hard to really buy into what's happening in the ring.

BE THE ARCHITECT

WRESTLING GAMES NEED great creation tools. That's non-negotiable. Not only do we need to be able to create our own superstar to take to the top, but we need to be able to fill in the gaps that the game can't – creating wrestlers that aren't in the game and correcting for creative changes after the game is released. This is one area where the *WWE* games have been pretty solid, but *WWE 2K15* reneged on that, stripping back options and giving us a frustrating create-a-wrestler system.

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XCOM THE BOARD GAME

Saving the world, one turn at a time

■ **THERE ARE PLENTY** of games that would translate from videogame to board game logic brilliantly, and *XCOM* is one of them. However, what's most interesting about this spin-off is that Fantasy Flight Games has chosen not to focus too heavily on the strategic combat that the game series is known for, rather to make it more about the preparation and planning that surrounds each of the combat missions. Players take on four different roles and work as a team to defend against, contain and defeat the alien menace

So if you're all working together, who is the enemy here? Well, in a clever twist, the alien forces are controlled by an app that you can run on your phone, tablet or laptop, or even in your browser. During the Timed Phase, it'll bark orders for the Central Officer to relay, later requesting data on UFO placements and global threat levels in order to plan out the alien invasion plans for the next turn. It's a unique blend of board game and videogame mechanics and one that does a great job of replicating the tension and thrill of Firaxis' game. It's more focused on dealing with the global threat rather than the contained ones you might be used to in the videogame – after all, if it was *exactly* the same as the PS3 game, it'd be a lot harder to recommend the version that involved a bunch more packing up when you're done playing...

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CENTRAL OFFICER

■ **THE CO RELAYS** information from the app to the team. Seconds saved on each task can be banked for one last push at the end of the timed phase, so it's important that the CO both passes on intel from and returns data to the app as quick as possible. In addition, this role deals with the satellite network, blasting troublesome UFOs out of orbit so they can't disrupt comms or descend to wreak havoc on the planet below.



CHIEF SCIENTIST

■ **HEADING UP THE** science team means you won't be able to get involved in direct conflict with the aliens but your work will be pivotal in assuring success for the team. Choosing the right projects to research and granting all roles additional cards as early as possible makes this most important role of the lot – by researching the right gear in the early stages, the science team can make everyone's job less stressful.



SQUAD LEADER

■ **THE CLOSEST ROLE** to playing the actual videogame is all about selecting units to take out on missions, bringing down Sectoids, Mutons, and Chryssalids (shudder) on the ground and making sure the base doesn't get overrun. Strategy is key here, selecting the right soldiers for the right tasks but you'll also need luck on your side – dice rolls are a key part of combat, so make sure your best roller is the one leading the team into battle.



COMMANDER

■ **AS THE NAME** suggests, the Commander is in charge of the operation. They'll be the one dealing with Crisis cards as they come up, managing finances to make sure the team doesn't overspend and sending out Interceptors to deal with surface-level UFO threats. It's a role where logic is the key skill involved, but there's also a little gambling involved with Interceptor placement and crisis management. Recommended for a player that can keep their cool under pressure.

TROPHY GUIDE

BATMAN TROPHY GUIDE

ARKHAM ASYLUM

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 48 1 1 18 28

■ **A LOT EASIER** than *Arkham City*'s Trophies, *Asylum* allows you to grab most Trophies in one go. Beat the game on Hard, and you'll net all three difficulty trophies. Ignore the collectable stuff for now; there are only two missable Trophies – 'Party Pooper' and 'Leave No Man Behind'. The former is near the end, requiring you to defeat a group of henchmen dancing in a corridor. The latter is near the start, requiring you to rescue two guards and a henchmen from a toxic cloud. Once you've mopped up the story Trophies, the game lets you go back and grab all the collectables. After that, head to Challenge Mode for the challenges. They're not *too* hard – stealth is the key to the Predator side, and long combos will get you through the Combat challenges.





ARKHAM CITY

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5
TROPHIES: 51 1 1 15 34

■ **YOUR FIRST FORAY** into *Arkham City* should be on Normal mode – if you haven't already experienced the story, it's the least intrusive way of playing Bats' against-all-odds tale and it'll net you *all* the Bronze story trophies, plus a Silver for completing the game. It'll also unlock New Game+. In the Normal save, finish up the Riddler challenges and practice your combat. New Game+ is a level above Hard mode, so beware of tricky enemies. If you can run through all the side missions and the story (again), you'll net the Perfect Knight – Day 2 Trophy – the game's only Gold which will in turn pop you a Platinum. If you're speedy, you can complete this in about 45 hours – but honestly the reality is you're going to be stumped on some New Game+ puzzles and bosses, along with any backtracking you may need to do, so you're probably looking at around 60-70 hours.

ARKHAM ORIGINS

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 5/5
TROPHIES: 51 1 2 9 39

■ **GETTING THE PLATINUM** will require you to fulfill a couple of irritating conditions: firstly, you'll need to complete the Story mode three times; secondly, you'll need to get another seven to help you boost online. We know, we know – it's not like it's even the best *Arkham* game, right? Anyway, run through the story quickly on Normal mode, making sure to grab missables 'Worst Nightmare' and 'Silent Knight' en route. Go back to the Bat Cave when you can to talk to Alfred, and grab the 'Point-Counter-Point' Trophy during the Deathstroke fight. Story mode cleared, go back and mop up the Most Wanted missions and Dark Knight challenges. Boot up New Game+, skip side missions, finish it, unlock I Am The Night – 'Hard' mode. You get *one* life here, so make it count, restart checkpoints if it looks like you'll die. Then... online time! You'll get most of the Trophies from playing, but you might want to just commit to grinding *hard* to hit max level in a lobby together.



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ARKHAM ORIGINS BLACKGATE

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5
TROPHIES: 31 1 6 7 17

■ **FOLLOWING ITS PARENT** game's cues, *Blackgate* will require three playthroughs to Platinum, and has four missable Trophies. Be aware that, unlike other *Arkham* games, you need to 'scan' all interactive items before use. If you want the 'World's Greatest Detective' Gold, you're going to want to be *right next to* these items when you scan them, too. Play

"THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED IN LESS THAN 30 HOURS, EVEN AS FEW AS 20"

through the game on Normal, do all the Detective Cases and get all the upgrades/collectables and you'll net 17 Bronze, four Silver and four Golds in one playthrough, needing two more runs to get the other two 'ending' Silvers and the two remaining Golds – 'World's Snazziest Dresser' and 'The Collector'. These last two playthroughs should be on New Game+, since new items become available. This can be achieved in less than 30 hours, even as few as 20 if you're an *Arkham* expert.

GOTHAM CITY IMPOSTERS

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5
TROPHIES: 12 0 0 8 4

■ **THIS VIGILANTE-ON-WANNABE-CRIMINAL** simulator is multiplayer only, but with only 12 Trophies to its name, that's not too much of a problem. You get a Bronze just for starting the online mode up, so that's something. Complete the Initiation to get a good grounding in the game, and you should unlock the majority of the Trophies in about five hours. The hardest part of the game are the challenges – of which there are 75 – but you only need 50 of these to progress (luckily, the Easy and Medium challenges will get you this *exactly*). If you're with friends, you can do everything you need in a single sitting – you don't need to be good at this game to unlock everything, you just need to keep on grinding away and eventually everything will unlock.





LEGO BATMAN 3 BEYOND GOTHAM

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 55 1 5 9 40

■ **FIRST UP, COMPLETE** Story Mode – that's all 15 levels and one bonus level near the end, in the Batcave. Jumping out of Story before it's complete can glitch and prevent progress, so just power ahead. You'll want Poison Ivy, Shazam and Atom for some completionist stuff in Free Mode, so if you missed them in Story, jump back in and find them. Play through the whole game again in Free Play, taking the time to get all the collectibles and buying Red Bricks after each level After this, go to the hub areas – the Batcave, the Watchtower, the Hall Of Justice and the Lantern Planets – and mop up the collectibles here. This is easy, but time consuming. Do all the VR challenges in the Batcave during this step; they give you currency for characters and vehicles. All going well, you'll be done in 30 hours.

INSTANT GAME COLLECTION

DYNASTY WARRIORS 8
FREE ALLIANCES VERSION

Given that the Dynasty Warriors series has got more entries than anything else ever, it's no surprise there's also a free-to-play title...



■ **YOU MIGHT THINK** a free-to-play version of *Dynasty Warriors* is ideally placed to introduce people who want to give the series a shot. We're not sure that's really the case, given that *Dynasty Warriors 8 Empires Free Alliances Version* doesn't really bother to explain itself to newcomers, meaning they could be left a little lost. Still, if you give yourself time to get your head around it, or have played *Dynasty Warriors* in the past, this free version of *Dyansty Warriors 8 Empires* is pretty fun.

For those who don't know, *Dynasty Warrior* is a third-person action game where you mash various buttons and lots of people die. Lots and lots of people, actually. There's also a strategic element to the game in that you must capture bases and defend your own strongholds on the way to victory.

In the game's Free Mode, you can choose to attack or defend and can also choose to play online. There's also a creation mode where you can make your own officers to use in battle. So, when it comes to how this game is trying to make money, it's really a glorified demo that's intended to encourage you to buy the main game. That's a good thing, because there are no microtransactions getting in the way of your fun. If you're happy to stick to Free Mode, you've in essence got yourself a full-on *Dynasty Warriors* game without having to shell out any cash. You can't say fairer than that.

FEED ME MORE

If you find this free introduction to Dynasty Warriors floats your boat, these are your go-to games...



DYNASTY WARRIORS 8 XTREME LEGENDS

The *XL* version of *Dynasty Warriors 8* on PS4 is one of the best in the series, so that's your best starting point for more *Dynasty Warriors*.



ONE PIECE: PIRATE WARRIORS 3

If you like the gameplay, but aren't a fan of the setting or characters, try the colourful *Pirate Warriors 3* on PS4, PS3 or Vita.



WARRIORS OROCHI 3 ULTIMATE

***Warriors Orochi* is a crossover of the *Dynasty Warriors* and *Samurai Warriors* series and the third entry is a fine example of the genre.**

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SHARING



PLAYSTATION 4 DIRECTORY

Every PS4 owner needs to know what games are worth owning. With over 80 games rated, our Directory is the ideal tool for building your library.



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YouTube EXCLUSIVE VOICEOVERS

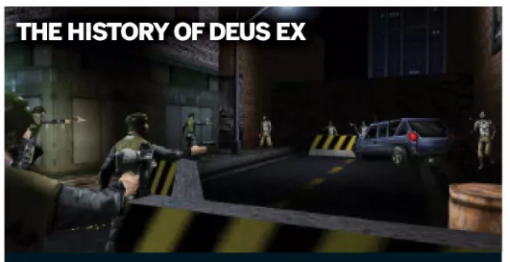
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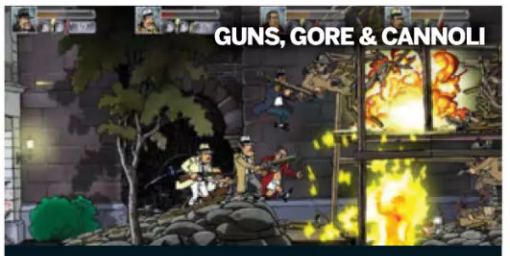
STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT



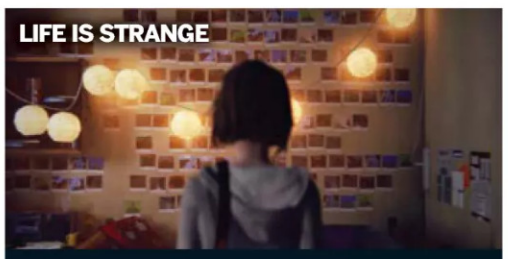
BREAKING DOWN THE biggest game of 2015



RETURNING TO THE classic



TESTING THE 2D Mafioso shooter



EPISODIC ECSTASY



A TRIUMPHANT RETURN?

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS III



FAN-KIND DIVIDED

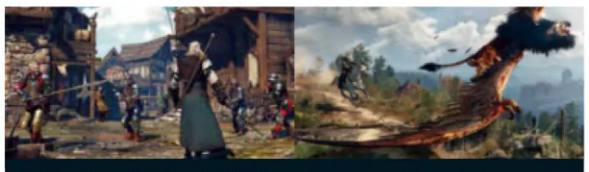
twitch LIVE GAMEPLAY STREAMING

twitch.tv/PlayUK

Join the **Play** team for live streaming events and shared gameplay

TOURNAMENTS!

Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch! The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or just some of the other tat that we found around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and maybe you could win something neat.



THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

It's time to travel the wilds of *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* to see what's out there to be discovered. Come and see if we tackle our objectives in a different way to you. We promise you, there will be a unicorn involved in one way or another.



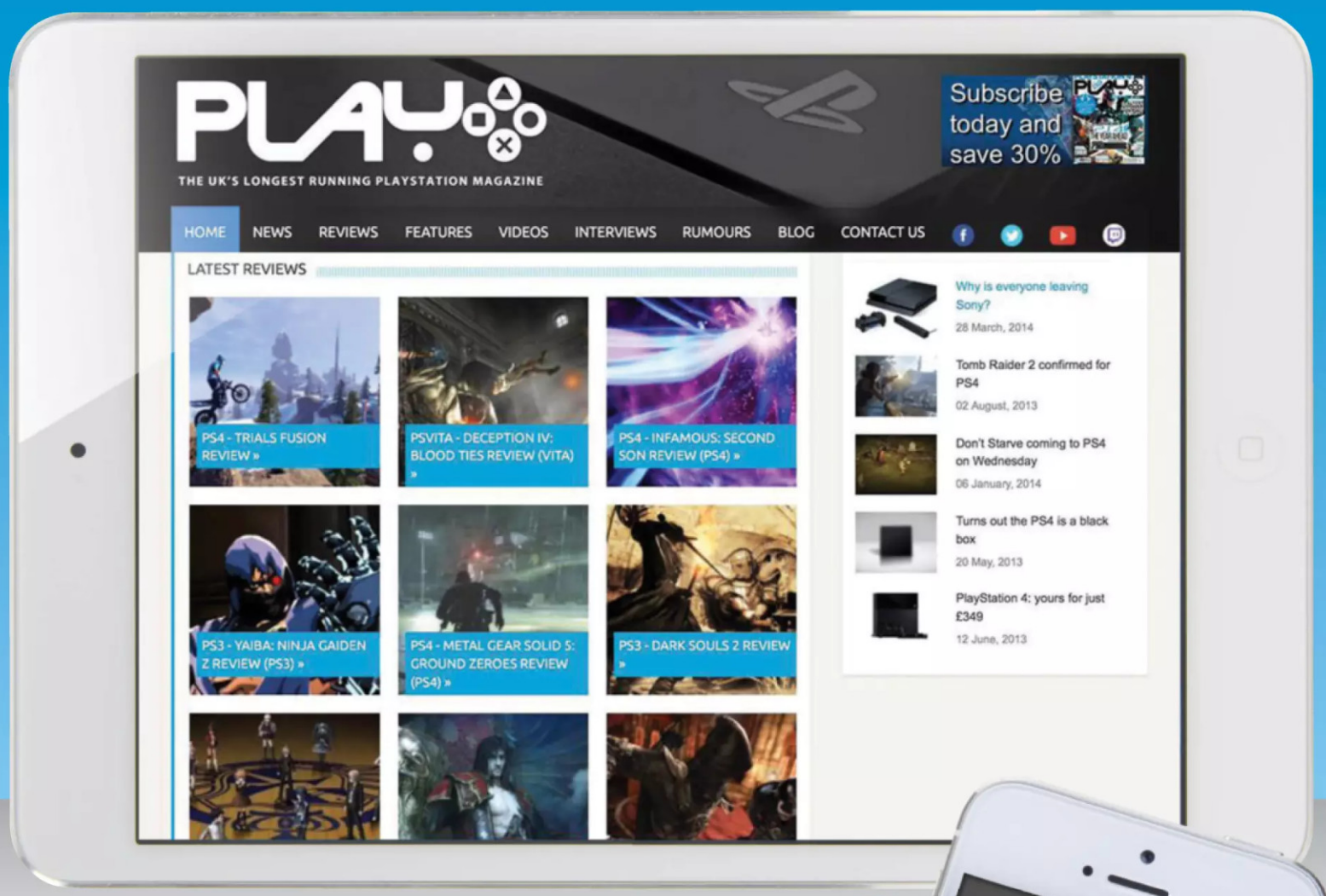
ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV

After duking it out in an office-wide tournament on *Mortal Kombat* for the last month or so (we are the best, of course) it's about time to bust out the PS4 version of *Street Fighter IV* and see how we fare there. See you online!

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Your one-stop resource for up-to-the-minute PlayStation news, rumours, trailers and reviews

PLUS **PLAY-MAG.CO.UK** ON TABLETS & SMARTPHONES



TABLET

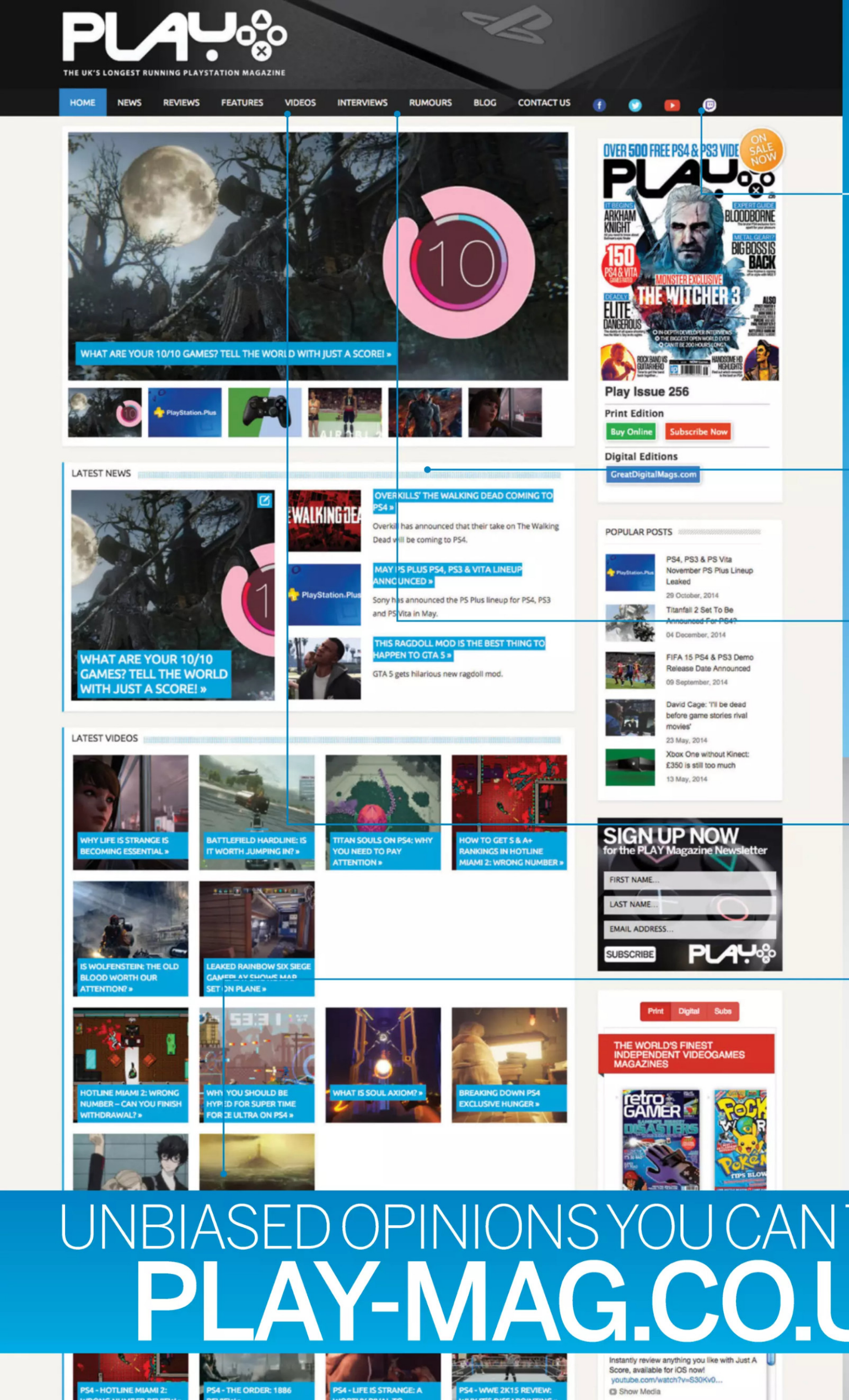
- A touch-friendly new interface
- Optimised to display perfectly on tablets
- Tons of PlayStation content at your fingertips
- Integrated video playback via YouTube

SMARTPHONE

- The same great content, only smaller
- Adjusts to screen size and orientation
- Easily searched database of PS4 content
- Get the latest news and trailers on the go



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FOLLOW

■ Make sure to check out **Play** on all our social media accounts to keep up to date with the magazine and PlayStation news from around the world, posted as soon as it happens.

DISCOVER

■ The slider shows off the most important stories on the site, complete with big pictures and text. Expect to see breaking news, opinion pieces and new trailers in particular.

CHOOSE

■ The top strap is your gateway to each section of the site. It's pretty self-explanatory, from reviews and features through to exclusive previews and PlayStation rumours.

WATCH

■ Video content is embedded into almost every post, optimised to work perfectly regardless of your browsing device of choice. Done with reading? Watch a video instead!

BROWSE

■ Scrolling down will give you a look at the top stories in each section; a brief overview of everything that is going on in the world of PlayStation. We update this every day.

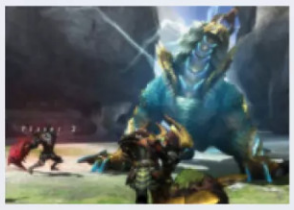
UNBIASED OPINIONS YOU CAN TRUST

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PlayList

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU

TEAM PICKS
E3 WISHES



top five
LUKE ALBIGÉS

1. Monster Hunter 5
2. SoulCalibur VI
3. Hearthstone on Vita/PS4
4. Bloodborne 2
5. Bomberman Collection



top five
LIAM WARR

1. BioShock PS4 Collection
2. Sons Of Anarchy Telltale Game
3. Guitar Hero: Taylor Swift
4. Destiny 'Comet' Reveal
5. FIFA 15-2



top five
DREW SLEEP

1. Kojima steals MGS from Konami
2. Final Fantasy XV release date
3. Elder Scrolls VI
4. Fallout 4
5. Some first-party Vita love



top five
PAUL WALKER-EMIG

1. Shenmue 3
2. Dishonored 2
3. Fallout 4
4. Deus Ex gameplay
5. Morpheus release date

PS4 LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Alien: Isolation	**249**	**90%**
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Assassin's Creed: Unity	**251**	**65%**
Axiom Verge	256	87%
Battlefield 4	**238**	**80%**
Battlefield Hardline	256	70%
Bloodborne	**256**	**92%**
Bound By Flame	**245**	**62%**
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	87%
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	**238**	**75%**
Child Of Light	244	79%
CounterSpy	**248**	**50%**
Daylight	245	20%
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	**242**	**74%**
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	254	71%
Destiny	**249**	**85%**
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	72%
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	**248**	**92%**
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	80%
Don't Starve	**240**	**81%**
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	84%
Dragon Ball Xenoverse	**255**	**54%**
Driveclub	250	77%
Dying Light	**254**	**85%**
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	80%
EA Sports UFC	**246**	**75%**
Evolve	254	66%
Far Cry 4	**251**	**80%**
Fez	**243**	**95%**
FIFA 15	**249**	**85%**
Final Fantasy Type-0	255	81%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	**243**	**85%**
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	253	80%
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	**252**	**92%**
Grand Theft Auto V	**251**	**97%**
Grim Fandango Remastered	254	83%
Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	**253**	**93%**
Hohokum	**248**	**80%**
Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number	**255**	**93%**
inFamous: First Light	249	55%
inFamous: Second Son	**242**	**86%**
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	**246**	**84%**
Knack	238	55%
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	**252**	**56%**
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	68%
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	**238**	**85%**
Lego The Hobbit	244	65%
LittleBigPlanet 3	**251**	**92%**
Lords Of The Fallen	251	75%
Mercenary Kings	**244**	**85%**
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	85%
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	**250**	**80%**
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	48%
NBA 2K15	**250**	**84%**
Need For Speed Rivals	238	83%
NHL 15	**249**	**63%**
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	60%
Outlast	**241**	**73%**
PES 2015	250	88%
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare	**248**	**71%**
Resident Evil HD	253	77%
Resident Evil Revelations 2	256	66%
Resogun	**238**	**91%**



An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.

Resogun Heroes	**247**	**93%**
Rogue Legacy	**248**	**91%**
Skylanders Swap Force	**238**	**77%**
Skylanders Trap Team	250	79%
Sniper Elite III	**246**	**72%**
Switch Galaxy Ultra	253	81%
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	**252**	**70%**
Teslagrad	253	75%
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	**245**	**25%**
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	**251**	**90%**
The Crew	252	52%
The Evil Within	**250**	**84%**
The Last Of Us Remastered	**247**	**94%**
The Order: 1886	254	81%
Thief	**241**	**70%**
Tiny Brains	240	68%
Transistor	**245**	**87%**
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	30%
Trials Fusion	**244**	**80%**
Valiant Hearts	247	64%
War Thunder	**239**	**80%**
Watch Dogs	245	80%
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	**249**	**62%**
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	78%
WWE 2K15	**252**	**48%**

PS3 LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
007 Legends	**225**	**44%**
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	69%
3D Dot Game Heroes	**192**	**87%**
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	**211**	**78%**
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	**177**	**61%**
After Burner Climax	**193**	**91%**
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	**223**	**43%**
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age Of Booty	**172**	**81%**
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	**207**	**57%**
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	**201**	**82%**
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	**230**	**45%**
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	**214**	**64%**
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	**193**	**83%**
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	**194**	**73%**
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	**239**	**70%**
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	**207**	**79%**
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	**173**	**65%**
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	**217**	**60%**
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	**188**	**65%**
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Assassin's Creed	**161**	**58%**
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	**225**	**78%**
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	**199**	**91%**
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	**212**	**75%**
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	74%
Asura's Wrath	**216**	**67%**
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	**198**	**77%**
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	**204**	**71%**
The Baconing	210	72%
Band Hero	**187**	**68%**
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	**211**	**94%**
Batman: Arkham Origins	**237**	**85%**
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	**182**	**89%**
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	**190**	**93%**
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	**219**	**44%**
Bayonetta*	**187**	**93%**
The Beatles: Rock Band	**184**	**96%**
Beat Hazard Ultra	**213**	**79%**
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	**207**	**86%**
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%
Binary Domain	**216**	**70%**
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	**169**	**88%**
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	**172**	**93%**
BioShock 2	**189**	**88%**
BioShock Infinite	**230**	**97%**
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	**163**	**43%**
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	**160**	**58%**
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	**190**	**85%**
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	**198**	**94%**
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	**209**	**63%**
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	**202**	**54%**
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blur	**193**	**86%**
Bodycount	210	54%
Bomberman Ultra	**185**	**82%**
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	**223**	**90%**
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	**250**	**69%**
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	**188**	**93%**
Brink	206	67%
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	**233**	**83%**
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	**185**	**79%**
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	**235**	**57%**
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Burnout Paradise	**162**	**74%**
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	**168**	**82%**
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	**155**	**81%**
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	**173**	**68%**
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	**186**	**94%**
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	**199**	**94%**
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	**181**	**85%**
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	**208**	**30%**
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	**200**	**88%**
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	**197**	**85%**
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	81%
Carnival Island	**213**	**53%**
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	**208**	**68%**
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	**215**	**61%**
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	**178**	**87%**
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	**203**	**80%**
Civilization Revolution	**168**	**90%**
Clash Of The Titans	**193**	**65%**
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%

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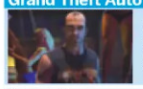
THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Bloodborne	92%
Battlefield Hardline	70%
Resident Evil Revelations 2	66%
Axiom Verge	87%

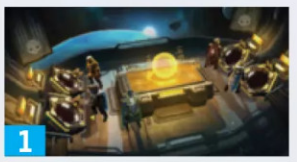
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Club	**163**	**80%**
Colin McRae: DiRT	**158**	**91%**
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	**184**	**87%**
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	**185**	**68%**
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	**186**	**84%**
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	**160**	**71%**
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	**199**	**70%**
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	**223**	**89%**
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	**218**	**37%**
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	**199**	**71%**
Critter Crunch	**188**	**91%**
Cross Edge	**182**	**59%**
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	**204**	**72%**
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubixx HD	**207**	**76%**
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	**181**	**38%**
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	**201**	**52%**
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	**164**	**53%**
The Darkness	**154**	**91%**
The Darkness II	**215**	**76%**
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	**211**	**90%**
Dark Souls II	**242**	**90%**
Darkstalkers Resurrection	**230**	**82%**
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	**188**	**83%**
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	**202**	**80%**
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	**223**	**78%**
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	**231**	**65%**
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	**211**	**61%**
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	**201**	**92%**
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	**203**	**88%**
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	**192**	**68%**
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	**201**	**86%**
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	**195**	**83%**
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	**199**	**72%**
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	**193**	**92%**
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	**178**	**29%**
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	**209**	**91%**
Devil May Cry 4	**163**	**89%**
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	**235**	**89%**
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	**219**	**84%**
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	**224**	**92%**
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	**186**	**91%**
DJ Hero 2	**198**	**88%**
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	**225**	**69%**
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	**227**	**93%**
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	**203**	**86%**

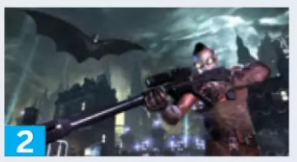
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	**168**	**61%**
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	**209**	**68%**
Droplitz	**184**	**91%**
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	**233**	**80%**
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	**233**	**51%**
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	**208**	**56%**
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	**230**	**40%**
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	**196**	**89%**
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	**215**	**75%**
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	**178**	**38%**
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	**169**	**85%**
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	**208**	**64%**
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	**152**	**91%**
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	**212**	**93%**
Elefunk	**170**	**45%**
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	**152**	**69%**
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	**197**	**83%**
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	**176**	**87%**
Eufloria	**212**	**85%**
Everybody's Golf 5	**158**	**88%**
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	**165**	**91%**
Explodemon	**203**	**70%**
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	**185**	**83%**
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	**223**	**79%**
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	**170**	**55%**
Fairy Fencer F	250	43%
Fallout 3	**173**	**97%**
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	**227**	**40%**
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	**172**	**74%**
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	**231**	**85%**
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	**168**	**65%**
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	**176**	**87%**
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 12	**210**	**86%**
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	**236**	**90%**
FIFA Street (2012)	**217**	**74%**
Final Fight: Double Impact	**193**	**90%**
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	**203**	**88%**
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	**181**	**84%**
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	81%
Final Fantasy XIII	**190**	**85%**
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	**240**	**80%**
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	**230**	**58%**
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	**179**	**70%**
Folklore	158	66%
Front Mission Evolved	**198**	**52%**
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
From Dust	**211**	**82%**
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	**151**	**69%**
Fuse	232	73%

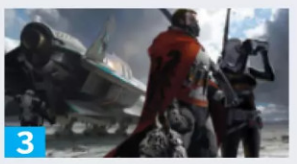
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Game Of Thrones	**220**	**39%**
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	**151**	**38%**
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	**219**	**60%**
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	**183**	**22%**
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	**178**	**38%**
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	**230**	**90%**
God Of War Collection*	**188**	**93%**
God Of War Collection: Volume II	**210**	**70%**
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	**213**	**63%**
Gotham City Imposters	216	78%
Gran Turismo 5	**200**	**85%**
Gran Turismo 6	239	83%
Grand Theft Auto IV	**166**	**98%**
Grand Theft Auto V	**236**	**97%**
 Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece; the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	191	75%
Green Day: Rock Band	**194**	**77%**
Grid 2	232	79%
Grid Autosport	**246**	**67%**
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	**191**	**94%**
Guardians Of Middle-earth	**227**	**71%**
Guitar Hero III	**160**	**90%**
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	**168**	**63%**
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	**179**	**88%**
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	**197**	**71%**
Guitar Hero World Tour	**173**	**95%**
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	**181**	**85%**
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	**182**	**60%**
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	**167**	**64%**
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	**189**	**94%**
Heavy Weapon	**187**	**75%**
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	**225**	**93%**
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	**203**	**69%**
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	**212**	**75%**
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	**190**	**87%**
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
I Am Alive	**217**	**64%**
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	**210**	**94%**
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	**168**	**52%**
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	**207**	**83%**
Inferno Pool	181	81%
Injustice: Gods Among Us	**231**	**80%**
Inversion	220	49%
Iron Man	**166**	**58%**
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	**216**	**82%**
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	**199**	**63%**
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	**244**	**80%**
Journey	216	87%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	**159**	**78%**
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	60%
Just Cause 2	**190**	**87%**
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	**196**	**71%**

*denotes import review

TOP TEN FANCIEST CAPES


1 Helldivers


2 Batman: Arkham City


3 Destiny

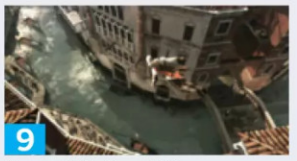

4 Viewtiful Joe

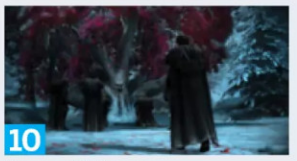

5 Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty


6 Lego The Hobbit

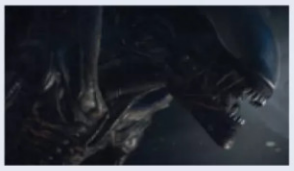

7 Lego Marvel Super Heroes


8 Marvel Vs Capcom 3


9 Assassin's Creed 2


10 Game Of Thrones

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



CRAPPING YOUR PANTS
PLAY: ALIEN: ISOLATION
A masterfully constructed horror experience that draws fear from the unpredictability of the Xenomorph that's stalking you throughout. If you're a fan of the *Alien* films, or horror in general, check this one out.



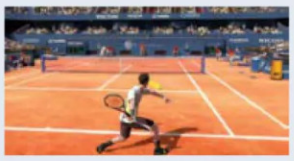
ALL THE GRAPHICS
PLAY: DRIVECLUB
Since it had weather effects added, *Driveclub* has stepped things up a notch when it comes to presenting you with stunning scenes that show off the power of the PS4. The issues that plagued the game at launch are now behind it, too.



GOING OLD-SCHOOL
PLAY: FINAL FIGHT DOUBLE IMPACT
You can't go wrong with this PS3 release of classic side-scrolling fighter *Final Fight*. It even comes with filters and an arcade cabinet view.



DEMONIC MOBSTERS
PLAY: THE DARKNESS
It's arguable that this game didn't get the recognition it deserves. It's a great shooter that combines gunplay with demonic powers. You can even watch the whole two hours of *To Kill A Mockingbird* in-game.



GRINDING TROPHIES
PLAY: VIRTUA TENNIS 4: WORLD TOUR EDITION
A great game that fans of the sport will enjoy if they pick it up on Vita. It's got online multiplayer too, so it should last you a long time. Be prepared for a grind if you want the Platinum.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Kick-Ass The Game	**194**	**60%**
Killer Is Dead	235	75%
Killzone HD	**225**	**65%**
Killzone 2	**176**	**93%**
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	**236**	**80%**
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	88%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	**215**	**70%**
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	**213**	**76%**
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	**207**	**20%**
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	**158**	**52%**
Landit Bandit	195	66%
LA Noire	**206**	**91%**
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	**198**	**90%**
The Last Guy	**171**	**91%**
Last Rebellion	**191**	**42%**
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	**174**	**54%**
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	**173**	**65%**
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	**194**	**79%**
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	**167**	**73%**
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	**206**	**76%**
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	**160**	**76%**
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	**227**	**85%**
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	**209**	**90%**
LittleBigPlanet	**172**	**94%**
LittleBigPlanet 2	**201**	**96%**
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	**159**	**80%**
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	**221**	**45%**
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	**175**	**52%**
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	**192**	**75%**
Lost Planet 3	236	58%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	**163**	**69%**
Lumines Supernova	**178**	**90%**
Madagascar 3	**224**	**39%**
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	**223**	**86%**
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	**220**	**70%**
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	**189**	**68%**
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	**208**	**70%**
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	**182**	**90%**
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	**202**	**88%**
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	**185**	**57%**
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	**201**	**97%**
Mass Effect 3	**216**	**93%**
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	**161**	**85%**
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Mega Man 9	**172**	**75%**
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	**171**	**78%**
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	**228**	**91%**
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	**167**	**92%**
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	**214**	**91%**
Metro: Last Light	**231**	**60%**
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	**202**	**51%**
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	**202**	**38%**
Minecraft	**240**	**93%**
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	**173**	**71%**
MLB: The Show 14	**245**	**90%**

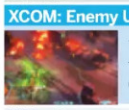
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
ModNation Racers	**192**	**90%**
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	**195**	**94%**
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	**173**	**68%**
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	**173**	**60%**
MotorStorm	**151**	**92%**
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	**203**	**76%**
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	**172**	**93%**
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV Alive	**206**	**42%**
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	**164**	**58%**
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	**217**	**53%**
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	**195**	**64%**
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	**224**	**88%**
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Street: Homecourt	**151**	**68%**
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	**199**	**91%**
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	**225**	**95%**
Need For Speed: Most Wanted is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	**161**	**86%**
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	**213**	**63%**
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	**215**	**39%**
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	**227**	**85%**
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	**223**	**74%**
NiGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	**154**	**88%**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	**217**	**63%**
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	**177**	**85%**
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	**155**	**82%**
Okami HD	**225**	**90%**
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	**224**	**69%**
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	**205**	**75%**
The Orange Box	**161**	**93%**
Outland	**207**	**72%**
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Overlord II	**181**	**68%**
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	**201**	**91%**
Pain	**183**	**69%**
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	**235**	**79%**
Peggle	**189**	**94%**
Persona 4 Arena	**231**	**91%**
Essential for both *Persona* fans and fighting game enthusiasts, *Persona 4 Arena* is an absolute joy to play.		
Persona 4 Arena Ultimax	**250**	**92%**
PES 2012	**210**	**74%**
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	**169**	**67%**
PixelJunk Shooter	**187**	**93%**
PixelJunk Shooter 2	**204**	**90%**
PixelJunk SideScroller	**213**	**77%**
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
Planet Minigolf	**196**	**58%**
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	**204**	**54%**
Poker Night 2	232	55%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	**224**	**54%**
Portal 2	**205**	**95%**
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	**173**	**67%**
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	**200**	**88%**
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	**181**	**76%**
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	**216**	**76%**
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	**236**	**70%**
Pure	171	80%
Puzzle Chronicles	**194**	**70%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Puzzle Dimensions	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	**181**	**68%**
Quantum Conundrum	**221**	**90%**
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	**197**	**29%**
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Rachet & Clank: Q-Force	**227**	**52%**
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rage	**211**	**60%**
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	**155**	**88%**
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	**203**	**54%**
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	**211**	**68%**
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	**221**	**88%**
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	**212**	**80%**
Red Dead Redemption	**193**	**92%**
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	**180**	**80%**
Remember Me	232	61%
Renegade Ops	**211**	**78%**
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	**211**	**72%**
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	**232**	**71%**
Resident Evil 4 HD	**210**	**93%**
Resident Evil 5	**177**	**86%**
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	**151**	**83%**
Resistance 2	**173**	**90%**
Resistance 3	**210**	**88%**
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Retro City Rampage	**228**	**78%**
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	**217**	**67%**
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	**176**	**58%**
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	58%
Risen 3: Titan Lords	**248**	**25%**
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	**223**	**80%**
Rock Band	**169**	**94%**
Rock Band 2	**179**	**96%**
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocksmith	**223**	**78%**
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	**209**	**49%**
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	**197**	**82%**
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	**180**	**76%**
Sacred 3	247	60%
Saints Row 2	**172**	**79%**
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	**253**	**65%**
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	**216**	**52%**
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	**194**	**90%**
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	**194**	**92%**
Savage Moon	**175**	**87%**
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	**198**	**36%**
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	**195**	**92%**
Sega Rally Online Arcade	**208**	**74%**
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	**209**	**80%**
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	**220**	**54%**
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	**158**	**92%**
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	**198**	**76%**
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	**197**	**86%**
Shatter	**183**	**91%**
Shaun White Skateboarding	**198**	**70%**
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	**177**	**32%**
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	**199**	**76%**
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	**217**	**81%**
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	**174**	**64%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	**160**	**82%**
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	**212**	**70%**
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	**195**	**80%**
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skate	**159**	**86%**
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	**192**	**86%**
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	**222**	**80%**
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	**230**	**60%**
Sniper Elite V2	**218**	**52%**
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	**230**	**55%**
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic Adventure	**198**	**63%**
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	**214**	**82%**
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	**225**	**40%**
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	**227**	**88%**
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	**151**	**52%**
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	**219**	**76%**
SoulCalibur IV	**169**	**94%**
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
South Park: The Stick of Truth	**242**	**81%**
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	**155**	**33%**
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	**197**	**69%**
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	**174**	**32%**
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	**153**	**79%**
Split/Second: Velocity	**192**	**90%**
Sports Champions	**196**	**83%**
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	**216**	**45%**
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	**219**	**81%**
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	**231**	**52%**
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	**171**	**65%**
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	**230**	**79%**
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	**178**	**51%**
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	**209**	**92%**
Street Fighter IV	**176**	**95%**
Street Fighter X Tekken	**217**	**83%**
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Strider	**242**	**62%**
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	**151**	**83%**
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	**157**	**82%**
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	**190**	**55%**
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	**176**	**72%**
Super Street Fighter IV	**191**	**90%**
Supremacy MMA	**211**	**40%**
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	**199**	**88%**
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	**222**	**77%**
Tales Of Monkey Island	**196**	**91%**
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tales Of Xillia 2	**249**	**71%**
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tekken 6	**184**	**94%**
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	**223**	**90%**
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	**221**	**60%**
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	**203**	**62%**
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	**233**	**94%**
The Last Of Us: Left Behind	242	81%
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	**224**	**55%**

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Walking Dead	**231**	**92%**
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	**206**	**38%**
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	**166**	**69%**
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	**162**	**72%**
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	**171**	**71%**
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	**173**	**80%**
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	75%
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	**196**	**69%**
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	**210**	**78%**
Tomb Raider	**229**	**90%**
Tomb Raider Trilogy	**204**	**86%**
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	**151**	**85%**
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	**160**	**72%**
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	**218**	**45%**
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	**203**	**60%**
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	**208**	**64%**
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	**194**	**80%**
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trine	**184**	**85%**
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	**194**	**61%**
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Tumble	**198**	**70%**
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	**163**	**46%**
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	**203**	**64%**
UFC Undisputed 2009	**180**	**90%**
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	**215**	**82%**
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Ultra Street Fighter IV	**246**	**85%**
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	**185**	**96%**
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	**212**	**90%**
Under Siege	**207**	**71%**
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	**225**	**78%**
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	**151**	**54%**
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	**189**	**76%**
Vanquish	**197**	**93%**
Viking: Battle For Asgard	**165**	**74%**
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	**220**	**90%**
Virtua Tennis 3	**150**	**91%**
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	**195**	**65%**
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	89%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	**234**	**83%**
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	**210**	**51%**
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	**202**	**14%**
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	**183**	**55%**
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	**184**	**41%**
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	**188**	**56%**
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	**207**	**49%**
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout HD	**172**	**84%**
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	**183**	**72%**
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	**224**	**85%**
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	**217**	**80%**
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WWE All Stars	**204**	**82%**
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE 13	225	55%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
X-Blades	**178**	**54%**
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	**224**	**94%**



Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: *XCOM* is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.

X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	**179**	**71%**
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	35%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	**216**	**60%**
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	**203**	**79%**
Zen Pinball 2	**224**	**90%**
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	**213**	**69%**
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	**182**	**78%**

PS VITA LISTING



A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	**217**	**64%**
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	**221**	**35%**
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	**216**	**85%**
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	**242**	**85%**
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	89%
Dead Nation	**201**	**86%**
Destiny Of Spirits	244	76%
Dokuro	**230**	**71%**
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	**216**	**81%**
FIFA Football	216	80%
flOw	**151**	**90%**
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	**187**	**85%**
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hotline Miami	**233**	**85%**
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	**194**	**96%**
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	**223**	**93%**
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	**216**	**85%**
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	**215**	**59%**
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	**217**	**81%**
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	**224**	**70%**
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	**230**	**60%**
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Orgarhythm	**230**	**55%**
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	**228**	**94%**
PixelJunk Monsters	**163**	**94%**
Puddle	**222**	**82%**
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	**215**	**52%**
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	**216**	**48%**
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	**225**	**32%**
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	70%
Soul Sacrifice	**232**	**85%**
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	**234**	**41%**
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumioni: Demon Arts	**230**	**46%**
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	**239**	**80%**
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	**216**	**83%**
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	86%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	**216**	**80%**
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	**215**	**83%**
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	**233**	**80%**
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	**227**	**84%**
WipEout 2048	215	87%

*denotes import review

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT (have they been playing?)

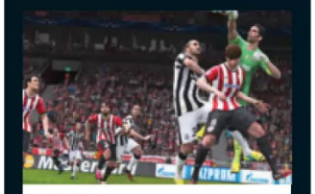
Mortal Kombat X

WHY (was it chosen?)

Someone has to deal with all those Scorpions

LUKE ALBIGÉS

IT'S ANNOYING THAT *Mortal Kombat X*'s dodgy netcode seems to be breeding a generation of players who think spamming full-screen projectiles and cheap teleports somehow makes them good at the game. Without lag, these scrubs are nothing and even with it, someone who understands how lag works (hello!) can still stomp them into the ground. I've been doing just that, wading through their bullshit and cleaning house with *actual combos*, though if the grumpy messages and chat hate are anything to go by, that makes *me* the cheap one. Sigh. Still, the punishment must and shall continue...



WHAT (have they been playing?)

PES 2015

WHY (was it chosen?)

Doing the treble

PAUL WALKER-EMIG

AFTER WORKING MY way up from the obscurity of second division football in my Master League, I have now led my team to the treble – the glory of league, European and domestic cup triumph is mine. All that's left now is to get my hands on the World Cup. Cannily, I made my manager German and was rewarded with an offer for the Germany job. Much better than trying to climb the mountain of international football with England – they're beneath me and my *PES* skills.

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